

# Music & Letters

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A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS

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JULY 1936

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Volume XVII

No. 3

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## FOR KEATS AND MOZART

WHEN human hands, the hands of the living, have failed you,  
Served only to vanquish and brought no peace,  
Then turn to the dead for your courage, for your heart's ease.  
They are yours forever : the words man has invented  
Against shame and sorrow and all failure.  
Listen to the young men building out of despair  
Their great symphonic cities.  
Listen to the young men making for human grief  
A cup of words, and be sustained by them.  
This is the mercy, the comfort you will find nowhere  
Among the living, the fallible, the beautiful destroyers.  
Put your faith in the dead through words and music glowing  
Who will never change.  
Lift up your hearts to the young dead.  
They will give you knowledge of  
Something like love  
(O to be comforted!)  
They will be the hosts to your pain,  
The wine and the bread,  
A pillow under your head :  
Give praise to those who are dead  
Who have created  
With human breath  
Something outside of life, outside of death—  
The heart translated.

MAY SARTON.



## A FORGOTTEN COMPOSER OF ANTHEMS :

WILLIAM SAVAGE (1720-89)

'ALL is not gold that glitters,' especially in the biographies of musicians. In an article entitled 'British Musicians a Century Ago,' contributed to this journal in 1931, I gave an example of this by showing how Sainsbury's once famous *Dictionary of Musicians* (1824) had been compiled. Living composers and instrumentalists were asked by the editor to supply their own biographies for this dictionary. Most of these were published verbatim, very often with the living composer's or instrumentalist's own estimate of his or her abilities. As a result, the vain and pompous individual had columns devoted to his own cheek, whilst the shy and reticent one had to be satisfied with a few lines. As this dictionary eventually became the basis of the biographies in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the *British Musical Biography*, and *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, to mention no others, the result has been that some musicians have been given attention out of all proportion to their merits, whilst others, of greater importance, have been accorded a mere nod of recognition as else have been totally ignored.

Among the latter is a certain English composer, William Savage (1720-89), who was Almoner, Vicar Choral and Master of the Choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral for well nigh thirty years. He was a man of undoubted ability who stood in the forefront of his profession in London. Indeed, the positions at St. Paul's called for such a man. Yet his name is practically unknown. He was contemporaneous with Hawkins (1719-89) and Burney (1726-1814), but neither of these mentions him in their histories.<sup>(1)</sup> More strange still is the absence of his name from that racy and rare brochure which carries as its title — *A. B. C. Dario Musico* (1780). He is likewise ignored by Busby,<sup>(2)</sup> Sainsbury,<sup>(3)</sup> the compiler of *The Georgian Era*,<sup>(4)</sup> Hogarth,<sup>(5)</sup> Fétis,<sup>(6)</sup>

(1) Hawkins, *A general history of . . . music* (1776), and Burney, *A general history of music* (1776-89), but cf. *infra*.

(2) Busby, *General history of music* (1819).

(3) [Sainsbury,] *A dictionary of musicians* (1824).

(4) 1832-34.

(5) Hogarth, *Musical history . . .* (1838).

(6) Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens . . .* (1835-44).

Mendel-Reisseemann,<sup>(7)</sup> Grove,<sup>(8)</sup> Riemann,<sup>(9)</sup> Davy,<sup>(10)</sup> Walker,<sup>(11)</sup> and the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He is mentioned, however, in Rees' *Cyclopedia* (1819), Baptie,<sup>(12)</sup> Brown and Stratton,<sup>(13)</sup> and Eitner.<sup>(14)</sup>

Of course, it has to be admitted that little of his music has appeared in print—a song or two, some rounds in a miscellaneous collection, and a few anthems and psalms also in a collection. His church music was certainly known and performed in London, Oxford<sup>(15)</sup> and Woolwich,<sup>(16)</sup> but most of it was in manuscript. Fortunately we possess a considerable amount of this music to-day. It is preserved in the British Museum, the Euing Collection at Glasgow, the Royal College of Music, and Christ Church, Oxford. Almost all the manuscripts in the British Museum and the Euing Collection came from the library of the well-known glee composer R. J. S. Stevens (1757-1837), who was a pupil of Savage. Indeed, most of them are in the handwriting of Stevens whilst about nine are in the hand of Savage himself. Others came into the possession of Stevens at the death of the Rev. George Savage, the son of the composer, in 1816.

The list of the music of William Savage given at the end of this article furnishes us with a fair idea of his activity as a composer. Of his earlier dated work, composed during his 'twenties' and 'thirties,' we have seven examples, none of which displays his ability to advantage. From 1765 until 1773, when his health broke down, there is quite a spate of activity, and probably most of the undated work, if style can be depended upon, dates from this period. During the recess (1773-77) and his temporary retirement (1777-81) he does not appear to have composed much, but his return to London (1781) brought him once more to the pen and perhaps his best work dates from this time.<sup>(17)</sup>

It is not easy to locate the position of Savage as a composer among his contemporaries. In the *British Musical Biography* of Brown and Stratton we are told that 'he composed chants and other church music.' As a matter of fact we only know of *three* of his chants whilst *forty* of his anthems and about *thirty* other items of church

(7) Mendel-Reisseemann, *Musikalisches Konversationslexikon*.

(8) Grove, *Dictionary of Music* . . . (1st ed. 1878 et seq., 2nd ed. 1904 et seq.).

(9) Riemann, *Musik-Lexikon* . . . (Engl. ed. 1893-5).

(10) Davy, *History of English music* (1895).

(11) Walker, *A history of music in England* (1907).

(12) Baptie, *Musical biography* (1863).

(13) Brown and Stratton, *British musical biography* (1897).

(14) Eitner, *Quellenlexikon* (1900- ).

(15) Wheatfield Church.

(16) The Royal Artillery Chapel.

(17) Not one of the voluntaries nor glees, mentioned by Stevens, appears to have survived.

music have been preserved. The best of his work compares favourably with that of his contemporaries Boyce, Battishill, Nares, and Kent. Many of his compositions are better than the productions of the two latter. Yet *Grove's Dictionary* (3rd ed.) says that he wrote 'chants and church music of little importance.'

Although he was interested in the Italian school, and there still exist in his handwriting some works by Alessandro Scarlatti, Steffani, and Colonna, he was not a plagiarist as some of his contemporaries were, nor even a disciple. In his anthems he seems to have followed the style of the old English school. His harmonies are rich and flowing and almost everywhere one can discern the real craftsman, even if that spark, which bespeaks the genius, does not illumine his art work.

Yet in spite of the high quality of his work, this composer is practically unknown. It is mainly because of this neglect that the present writer has set himself the task of rehabilitating his name. Fortunately for us, biographical details were preserved by his most distinguished pupil, R. J. S. Stevens, who, in his day, was likewise concerned at the neglect of the works of his old teacher. This memoir of Savage, in the handwriting of Stevens, may be found prefixed to the works of Savage in the Euing Collection at Glasgow. As it contains, perhaps, all that we shall ever know of Savage, it is given here in its entirety. This, together with the carefully noted and dated compositions of Savage in the same collection, enables us to form a fair estimate of the composer.

First of all we know that his first name was William, not Richard.<sup>(18)</sup> In Eitner's *Quellen-Lexikon* we are told that there is an anthem by Savage in Arnold's *Cathedral Music* (1790). All that has been included in the latter work is a chant. The same authority says that a *Gesang* is to be found in Stevens' *Sacred Music*. This latter actually contains two anthems, four psalms, and a single chant by Savage.

Here, in full, is the memoir of William Savage by R. J. S. Stevens :

#### THE LIFE OF MR. WILLIAM SAVAGE

By R. J. S. Stevens, Charterhouse, February, 1829.

" Burney, in Rees' *Cyclopedia*, says :

' William Savage, a vocal performer and singing master of some eminence in London. He was brought up in the King's Chapel, and his treble voice was so good, that he performed in some of

<sup>(18)</sup> See *Dictionary of National Biography* (sub. 'Stevens, R. J. S.') and the *Catalogue of Manuscript Music in the British Museum*, i, 119.

Handel's operas and oratorios under the title of *the boy*. When his voice broke, it descended into a powerful, and not unpleasant bass; and in this voice he performed for Handel in some of his early oratorios. When he ceased to sing in public, he became a singing master: and having in his boyish days frequently heard Italian singers at the opera, he had imbibed some of their taste and manner, which brought him into vogue as a vocal instructor, particularly in the City,<sup>(19)</sup> where he was appointed Master of the Boys in St. Paul's Cathedral. He was a vain, pompous man, and felt, and made others feel, his importance. He taught [Joseph] Vernon to sing the fairy's songs in the pantomime of Queen Mab in 1750; and happening to call on him one morning while he was dressing, we found that he had three boys to wait upon him while he was washing his hands: one to bring in, and hold the ewer, one to present him the wash ball, and a third to hold the towel. He was the first English music master who kept his carriage. No master had more than two guineas a month, but servants' wages, housekeeping, and house rent, were in proportion. Savage, who died in 1789, outlived fashion so much, as to walk on foot during the last years of his life.'

There is such a strain of ill nature apparent in this article by Dr. Burney, that it has induced me to collect every particular respecting my old master, in order to refute such insinuations, and faithfully to represent his character, as a valuable member of society, and as a musical professor of considerable abilities and eminence. I shall endeavour to answer each objection to my poor friend regularly.

Never having heard that Mr. Savage was a boy in the Chapel Royal St. James, I have taken pains to ascertain the fact, but have been informed (October, 1828) by Mr. [William] Hawes,<sup>(20)</sup> Master of the Boys of the Chapel Royal to his present Majesty King George the Fourth, 'that the list of the boys educated there, is so very imperfect as to afford no satisfaction on the subject.' Where then could Dr. Burney have gained this information? It seems however, very extraordinary, that I should never have known either this circumstance, or that he sang 'in some of Handel's operas and oratorios, under the title of the boy.'

That he had, when a young man, 'a powerful, and not unpleasant bass voice' is very certain; and it is equally so 'that he did perform in Handel's oratorios,' when they were conducted by the great musician himself. Nor did he cease to sing in public 'till in consequence of ill health, being very asthmatic, he left London about 1777, or 1778, when he retired to an estate that he had purchased at Tenterden in Kent, and where he resided three or four years. As to

(19) [i.e. the city quarter of London.]

(20) [William Hawes (1785-1846). He also held the same positions as Savage at St. Paul's Cathedral.]

his 'vanity' or 'pomposity,' and his making others 'feel his importance,' it really must be considered as a misconceived idea of a person who had no connection either with Mr. Savage, or any of his family. Having been on the opera stage and having studied the reading of Milton under a Mr. Rice, a teacher of elocution, he had perhaps acquired a distinct and energetic method of speaking, which might impress a stranger with the idea of his being pompous; but all this vanished when you were acquainted with him.

The story of Mr. Savage having been attended by three boys while washing his hands, is too absurd to require an answer. What accidental circumstance could have afforded Dr. Burney the foundation for such a description it is impossible to say; but it is perfectly certain that the boys of the cathedral had nothing whatever to do with any domestic arrangements.

His being 'the first English music master who kept his carriage,' is a circumstance certainly in his favour, as he was one of the last men who would have done it, had it been unsuitable to his circumstances, and to his character as an honest man. Mr. Savage's terms for teaching either singing, or the science of music, was half a guinea a lesson, at that time certainly, not common terms; and he had full employment. As to the observation of his having 'outlived fashion,' and his walking on foot during the last years of his life, not to comment upon this ill-natured paragraph,—the truth is, that having declined his profession, and left London in the height of his career, on account of ill health, when after a few years of absence he again returned, his connection being dissolved, he did not again regain the celebrity that he had relinquished.

I shall now proceed to give the most accurate account of the life of Mr. Savage, that I have been able to collect. As respects the Chapel Royal St. James' and St. Paul's Cathedral, I have been very materially assisted by my researches, by the Revd. Mr. Holmes the sub dean of the Chapel Royal to his present Majesty King George the Fourth; and by Mr. [William] Hawes, the Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, and St. Paul's Cathedral, Almoner, and Vicar Choral there likewise. Formerly I had received some information from Mrs. Pegge, the second wife of Samuel Pegge Esqre. the celebrated antiquary. (Mrs. Pegge was very intimate with Mr. and Mrs. Savage.) Likewise from Mrs. R. Rolleston, Mr. Savage's daughter [Jane], I have received interesting communications respecting her father and family.

Mr. William Savage was born in the year 1720, of a good family;



and believed to be a distant branch of the River's.<sup>(21)</sup> By the South Sea failure (1720) his family were much reduced in circumstances,<sup>(22)</sup> and what Savage had learned when very young, by way of accomplishment, it was thought proper to turn to his pecuniary advantage by his taking up the musical profession. He was a pupil of Dr. Pepusch,<sup>(23)</sup> Signor Geminiani,<sup>(24)</sup> also kindly assisted him, in the progress of his studies. That his professional abilities were approved by Handel, appears by his having been employed to sing in his operas of *Deidamia*, *Hymen*, *Alcina*, *Justin* [*Faramond*], and many of his oratorios &c. Mr. Savage sung also, as principal bass, in most of Dr. Boyce's odes,<sup>(25)</sup> when [Boyce was] Composer, and Master of the Band of Musicians to his Majesty King George the Third. He was organist of Finchley Church Middlesex in 1741, as his name appears as a subscriber to Dr. [Maurice] Greene's Anthems at that period.<sup>(26)</sup> He was admitted a gentleman in Ordinary in the Chapel Royal St. James as a bass voice in the year 1744.<sup>(27)</sup> On March 17, 1747/8, upon the death of Mr. Charles King,<sup>(28)</sup> he succeeded as Almoner, Vicar Choral, and Master of the Choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral.<sup>(29)</sup> He was one of the original honorary members of the Catch Club in the year 1761<sup>(30)</sup>: one of the original members of the Beef Steak Club: likewise an active member of the Academy of Ancient Music.<sup>(31)</sup> In the year 1773, in consequence of ill health, he resigned the place of Almoner, and Master of the Choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral to Robert Hudson, B.M.,<sup>(32)</sup> who had been one of his early pupils<sup>(33)</sup>:

(21) Mrs. Pegge. [Richard Savage (ca. 1697-1743) the poet made a similar claim.]

(22) Mrs. Rolleston.

(23) [J. C. Pepusch (1667-1752), a German composer and musical director who settled in London. He was organist of the Charterhouse (1737-52).]

(24) [F. Geminiani (1680-1762), an Italian violinist and composer; who conducted concerts in London (1741-49).]

(25) [William Boyce (1710-79), organist and composer. He was made Composer to the Chapel Royal in 1736, but his appointment as Master of the King's Band of Music dates from 1755 (not 1775 as in Brown and Stratton), whilst his position as an organist at the Chapel Royal was taken up in 1758.]

(26) [Greene, *The forty select anthems* (1743).]

(27) The Sub Dean, Revd. Mr. Holmes.

(28) [Charles King, Mus.Bac. (1687-1748), composer and organist.]

(29) Mr. Hawes.

(30) Warren Horne: Signor Quilici. [Warren Horne is said by Stevens (see below) to have been secretary of the Catch Club, but his name does not appear as such in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*. This was properly 'The Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Catch Club,' which had an illustrious membership, including the Royal Family. Grove does not mention Savage among the notable 'professional members' of the society, although a nobody like Piozzi is included.]

(31) Stephen Groombridge, Esqre. [The Academy of Ancient Music, which flourished from ca. 1710 to 1792, was a society whose concerts were one of the musical features of London life of the period.]

(32) Mr. Hawes.

(33) [See below.]

and on April 5, 1777, he likewise resigned his place of Vicar Choral in the cathedral to R. Bellamy, B.M., who had also been his pupil,<sup>(34)</sup> and was an admirable bass singer.<sup>(35)</sup>

After a few years residence at Tenterden, in Kent, his health being re-established he returned to London about the year 1780 or 1781, and resided in Salisbury Court, Fleet Street from whence, to the great surprise of all his friends, he advertised his readiness to resume his profession, and to teach the science of music; but as I have before said, he quitted an eminent station in his profession, which, after a considerable absence from London, he did not regain. He afterwards resided in East Street, Red Lion Square, Holborn. He died in July, 1789,<sup>(36)</sup> aged 69 years, and he was buried in the ground belonging to the Parish of St. George the Martyr, Queen Square, Bloomsbury, at the end of Grays Inn Lane.

The writer of this article had the melancholy satisfaction of attending the funeral of a man, whose abilities as a musician, he had long been acquainted with, and admired; and whose character as a worthy, honest, upright man, he had always esteemed. Mr. Savage was held in much estimation by his contemporaries for his abilities and ingenuity in his profession, and likewise for his character as a worthy and respectable man. That he was one of the private friends of Handel is evident by his having a ring [given him] at his [Handel's] funeral; which ring upon the death of Mr. Savage's son [the Rev. George Savage], was kindly given to me by his widow Mrs. Savage of Surbiton, Kingston, Surrey. His more particular connections and friends were of the first respectability, both in point of character and situation in life, and some of them were those of the greatest ability and genius.

As I have before said, Mr. Savage had a pleasant bass voice of the compass of two octaves: he had a clear articulation, perfect intonation, great volubility of voice, and chaste and good expression. In sacred music particularly, his pathos and feeling were excellent and very impressive. To his friends he frequently sang songs in his falsetto voice, as an alto. These were generally songs of expression chiefly from Handel's oratorios, and were both of the pathetic and exulting kind. I remember now, with the greatest pleasure his performance of 'He was despised and rejected of men,' 'O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion' from the *Messiah*: 'Thou shalt bring them in,' &c., &c., and many others which by appropriate pathos or

(34) [See below.]

(35) Mr. Hawes.

(36) [July 27, according to Brown and Stratton.]

animation with which he sang them delighted all who heard him. He was a good organ player, and vocal composer. I have many anthems, a service, several voluntaries, glees, duettos, and other secular compositions by Mr. Savage, amongst which are two penitential anthems, not unworthy even of a Purcell. (See 'O Lord rebuke me not' and 'Hearken unto my voice O Lord.') These MSS. came into my possession upon the death of Mr. Savage's son, the Revd. George Savage, in the year 1816. Mr. Savage was an excellent teacher of the science of music in all its branches. He was hasty and passionate when teaching his boys, but by constant attention to their elementary rules every morning before breakfast, he made them correct and ready performers. The four senior boys, could generally sing at sight. They were also instructed in playing the harpsichord. Mr. Warren Horne, Secretary to the Catch Club, said that Savage could not sing at sight himself, but he made his boys sing at sight. Perhaps, he was not so ready at first sight as could have been wished.

Mr. Savage married Miss Mary Bolt, a very amiable and accomplished woman with a fortune of £19,000, dependent only on her own will.<sup>(37)</sup> She was also considered to be a beautiful woman. In the latter part of her life she published a small book of poems, which were thought to be ingenious compositions. She died in March, 1788, having three children, two sons and a daughter, viz.—the Revd. George Savage, Vicar of the United Parishes of Kingston and Richmond, Surrey; and Rector of St. Mary Aldermary, London; Jane Savage who married Mr. R. Rolleston, a respectable merchant of Mincing Lane<sup>(38)</sup>; and William Savage who was a clerk in the East India Company's service, but having been guilty of some extravagances and imprudences, in his youth, he left England, and died prematurely in the West Indies."

Stevens gives a list of the pupils of Savage 'who were eminent in the musical profession,' as follows:—

Robert Hudson, Mus.Bac. [1732-1815], pupil to King and Savage. Vicar Choral of St. Paul's Cathedral, 1756; Almoner and Master of the Choristers, 1773, resigned in 1793; Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, St. James, to King George the Third; Music Master to Christ's Hospital, London. A tenor voice.

Samuel Long. Pupil to King and Savage. Organist of St. Peter le Poer, London. A pleasing composer.

Samuel Porter [1733-1810]. Pupil to King and Savage. Organist of Canterbury Cathedral.

Jonathan Battishill [1738-1801]. Pupil to King and Savage.

(37) From Mr. Edison of Cooper's Hall (40 years ago) who had drawn the marriage settlement.

(38) [Jane Savage was known as the composer of a number of pieces for the harpsichord or pianoforte as well as some songs, many of which were published.]

Articled to Savage at King's death. Organist of St. Clement, Eastcheap, and Christ Church, Newgate Street [London]. Admirable composer. A tenor voice. Excellent cathedral organist.

Charles Frederic Reinhold [1737-1815].<sup>(39)</sup> Pupil to Savage. Organist of St. George's, Bloomsbury [London]. A celebrated bass singer and actor.

Joseph Vernon [1738-82]. Articled to Mr. Savage by Mr. Garrick. Tenor voice, rather weak. An admirable comedian.<sup>(40)</sup>

Martin Rennoldson. Pupil to Savage. Organist of St. Matthew, Friday Street [London].

John Soaper [1743-94]. Pupil to Savage. Vicar Choral to St. Paul's Cathedral. Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, St. James. A good organist. Coarse bass voice.

James Evance. Pupil to Savage. Organist of Alhallowes, Thames Street, and St. Andrew's, Holborn [London].

William Evance. Pupil to Savage. Organist at Durham. Tenor voice. Pleasing composer for the harpsichord.

Thomas Raworth. Pupil to Savage. Tenor voice. Sung at Marylebone Gardens.

Richard Bellamy, Mus.Bac. [ca. 1742-1813]. Pupil to Savage. Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. Lay Vicar of Westminster Abbey. Almoner, Vicar Choral and Master of the Choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral. A most admirable bass singer.

Stephen Paxton [1735-87]. Pleasing bass voice. Pupil to Savage in singing. Violoncello performer.

Joseph Olive [d. 1786]. Pupil to Savage. Organist of St. Botolph, Aldersgate [London].

Edmund Olive [d. 1824]. Pupil to Savage. Organist of Bangor Cathedral. Now [?] of Warrington.

John Percy [1749-97]. Pupil to Savage. Organist of Denmark Chapel, Camberwell [London]. Tenor voice. Good composer and singer.

William Wheatley. Pupil to Savage. Organist of Lewisham, Kent. Bass voice.

— Brown. Pupil to Savage. Sung at the Stratford Jubilee. Engaged by Dr. Arne<sup>(41)</sup> having left Savage.

— Huttley. Pupil to Savage. Good hautboy performer.

R[ichard] J[ohn] S[amuel] Stevens [1757-1837]. Apprentice to Savage [as a chorister in St. Paul's Cathedral], 1768; organist of St. Michael's, Cornhill [London], 1781; Honble Society of Inner Temple, 1786; Charterhouse, 1796; Gresham Professor of Music,

<sup>(39)</sup> [? Frederick Charles].

<sup>(40)</sup> [Cf. *Grove's Dict.*, 3rd ed., v, 487.]

<sup>(41)</sup> [Thomas A. Arne (1710-78) was, from 1745 to the date of his death, the leading theatrical composer in London. He wrote the music to Garrick's ode for the Stratford (Shakespeare) Jubilee in 1769.]

1801; Master to Christ's Hospital, 1808. Tenor voice. Composer of glees and harpsichord lessons.<sup>(42)</sup>

## LIST OF WORKS

(All in manuscript except where stated otherwise.)

E.C. = Euing Collection, Glasgow.

B.M. = British Museum.

R.C.M. = Royal College of Music.

## CHURCH MUSIC.

## Anthems.

- V.A. — 'Praise the Lord.' 27th Sept., 1765. *E.C.*<sup>(1)</sup>  
 S.A. — 'O Lord rebuke me not.' 17th May, 1767. *E.C.*<sup>(1)</sup>  
 S.A. — 'O magnify the Lord our God.' 27th June, 1767. *E.C.-B.M.*<sup>(2)</sup>  
 F.A. — 'Behold now praise the Lord.' 11th Nov., 1767. *E.C.-B.M.*<sup>(3)</sup>  
 F.A. — 'I cannot bear this absence.' 3rd Jan., 1768. *E.C.*  
 F.A. — 'Let them neglect thy glory.' 11th Jan., 1768. *E.C.*  
 F.A. — 'From heav'n the sinning angels fell.' 14th Jan., 1768. *E.C.*  
 F.A. — 'Thy favours Lord surprise our souls.' 23rd Jan., 1768. *E.C.*  
 F.A. — 'Why should we start and fear to die.' 30th April, 1768. *E.C.*  
 A. — 'The Lord is my shepherd.' Duet. 23rd July, 1768. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 ... — 'Hallelujah. An imitation of the singing at the Jews' Synagogue in Dukes Place [London] about the year 1770. *E.C.*  
 S.A. — 'In deep distress.' 10th Nov., 1772. *E.C.*  
 S.A. — 'On thee who dwelleth above the skies.' 12th Nov., 1772. *E.C.*  
 S.A. — 'Who place on Zion's God their trust.' 15th Nov., 1772. *E.C.*  
 S.A. — 'Had not the Lord.' 18th Nov., 1772. *E.C.*  
 V.A. — 'O praise the Lord.' Dec., 1772 (?). *E.C.*  
 P.A. — 'Hearken unto my voice O Lord.' 24th Oct., 1779. *E.C.-B.M.*<sup>(4)</sup>  
 S.A. — 'Hear O Lord.' 27th Oct., 1779. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 S.A. — 'Happy is the man.' 9th May, 1783. *E.C.*  
 V.A. — 'Blessed is he that considereth.' 7th June, 1783. *E.C.*  
 S.A. — 'Call to remembrance.' 28th-30th Dec., 1783. *E.C.-B.M.*<sup>(5)</sup>  
 A. — 'Hide not thou thy face.' 1st Jan., 1784. *E.C.-B.M.*<sup>(6)</sup>  
 S.A. — 'Behold it is Christ.' 3rd Jan., 1784. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 A. — 'Almighty and everlasting God.' 9th Jan., 1784. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 A. — 'Hear my prayer O God.' 12th-15th Jan., 1784. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 F.A. — 'Deliver us O Lord.' 24th Jan., 1784. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 F.A. — 'I will exalt thee O Lord.' 29th Feb., 1784. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 F.A. — 'O Lord my God.' Begun 1784, finished 28th Feb. 1786. *E.C.*<sup>(7)</sup>  
 S.A. — 'Now to the Lord.' n.d. *E.C.*  
 S.A. — 'How vain are all things here below.' n.d. *E.C.*  
 S.A. — 'Haste your grateful tribute.' n.d. *E.C.*  
 S.A. — 'My soul how lovely is the place.' n.d. *E.C.-B.M.*<sup>(8)</sup>  
 A. — 'O be joyful in the Lord.' n.d. Duet. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 V.A. — 'O Lord our governor.' n.d. *E.C.*  
 A. — 'Praise the Lord O my soul.' n.d. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 A. — 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 S.A. — 'The Lord is my shepherd.' With 5 part chorus. n.d. *B.M.*<sup>(9)</sup>

(42) [See *Music and Letters*, vols. xiii, p. 264, and xiv, p. 128.]

(1) A different version was printed in Stevens' *Sacred Music*.

(2) In the *Catalogue of Manuscript Music in the British Museum* it is doubted whether this is by Savage. In the Euing MS. it is not only definitely attributed to Savage but dated.

(3) There are two copies in the B.M.

(4) There are two copies in the B.M.

(5) There are two copies in the B.M., one, in the handwriting of Savage's son William, having a concluding chorus instead of an Amen.

(6) There are two copies in the B.M., one being in the handwriting of Savage's son William.

(7) With orchestral accompaniment.

(8) Beginning only in B.M.

(9) Apparently in the handwriting of Joseph Olive, a pupil of Savage.



- A. — 'Jesus shall reign.' n.d. *E.C.*  
 S.A. — 'Why do we mourn departed friends.' n.d. *E.C.*  
 F.A. — 'Salvation O the joyful sound.' n.d. *E.C.*

*Services.*

- Kyrie eleison in F. 1755. *B.M.-E.C.*<sup>(10)</sup>  
 Te deum in C. 23rd Oct., 1767. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 Jubilate in C. 5th Nov., 1767. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 Santus in C. 11th Nov., 1767. *E.C.-B.M.*<sup>(11)</sup> *R.C.M.*  
 Kyrie eleison in C. 12th Nov., 1767. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 Credo in C. 17th Nov., 1767. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 Magnificat in C. 27th Nov., 1767. *E.C.-B.M.*  
 Nunc dimitis in C. 6th Dec., 1767. *E.C.-B.M.*<sup>(12)</sup>  
 Requiescat in pace in C. n.d. *E.C.*  
 Requiescat in pace in G. Arranged by Savage. n.d. *E.C.*

*Chants.*

- Double chant in C. 18th Jan., 1755. *Christ Church, Oxford.*  
 Single chant in C. Printed in Stevens' *Sacred Music* and Arnold's *Cathedral Music*.  
 Single chant. Melody by the Rev. G[eorge] Savage, son of the composer.

*Psalms.*

- 1st, 5th, 9th<sup>(13)</sup>, 13th, 17th, 19th<sup>(13)</sup>, 25th, 22nd, 27th (4th Nov., 1772), 37th, 50th, 51st, 91st (5th Nov., 1772), 97th (5th Nov., 1772), 98th, 100th<sup>(13)</sup>, 102nd, 104th, 110th, 130th, 136th<sup>(13)</sup>, 137th, 138th, 148th, 149th. All in *Euing Collection*.

## SECULAR MUSIC.

*Songs.*

- Song. — 'My fair is beautiful as love.' [London, Ca. 1740.]  
 " 'No more of am'rous troubles.' 1755. *B.M.*  
 " 'As swift as time.' 1756. *B.M.*  
 " 'On the very First of May.' Words by Mrs. Savage. 1756. *B.M.*  
 " 'Cease for a while thy strain.' 1782. *B.M.*<sup>(14)</sup>  
 " 'My days have been so wond'rous free.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 " 'The nymph that I lov'd.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 " 'Serene is the morning.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 " 'Hark, thro' yon fretted vaults.' After 1761. *B.M.*<sup>(14)</sup>  
 Duet. — 'The night approaches.' n.d. *B.M.*<sup>(15)</sup>  
 " 'Soon as I close my eyes.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 " 'Why pant'st thou.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 " 'For you, fair nymph.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 " 'Think, my Phillis.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 " 'Once again, my Cloris.' n.d. *B.M.*

*Catches, rounds and canons.*<sup>(16)</sup>

- à 4. — 'Ripe sparagrass.' 1750. *B.M.*  
 à 6. — 'Muffins and crumpets.' 1780. *B.M.*  
 à 6. — 'Muffins ho.' 1780. *B.M.*

<sup>(10)</sup> In duplicate in the *B.M.*

<sup>(11)</sup> There are two copies in the *B.M.*

<sup>(12)</sup> This complete service in C (1767) is said in the British Museum catalogue to be 'probably' by Savage. It is definitely attributed to him by his pupil Stevens in the *Euing MS.*

<sup>(13)</sup> These have been published in Stevens' *Sacred Music*.

<sup>(14)</sup> In the handwriting of the composer.

<sup>(15)</sup> In the handwriting of Stevens.

<sup>(16)</sup> A number of these were published in *A collection of catches by Dr. Arne*, . . . , *Mr. Savage*, . . . London, [1764?] and in *A collection of catches . . . selected by T. Warren*, London, [1763-94]. There is also some solfeggio exercises in the handwriting of Savage in the *B.M.* which contain catches, rounds, glees, etc.

- à 6.—'Do you want any very good matches.' 1780. *B.M.*  
 à 5.—'Half an hour past eleven o'clock.' 1784. *B.M.*  
 à 4.—'A virgin so lovely.' A Welsh epitaph. 1788. *B.M.*  
 à 4.—'Come buy my water-cresses.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 à 4.—'Dead drunk here Elderton doth lie.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 à 4.—'Hot loaves.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 à 4.—'Come, who will buy a jack-line.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 à 4.—'Hares skins or rabbit skins.' n.d. *B.M.*<sup>(17)</sup>  
 à 4.—'O Absalom.' n.d. *E.C.*  
 à 4.—'Poor Ralpho.' n.d. *B.M.*  
 à 6.—'I laid me down.' n.d. *E.C.-B.M.*<sup>(18)</sup>  
 à 6.—Hallelujah in C. n.d. *E.C.*  
 à 4.—Hallelujah in O (3/4). n.d. *E.C.*  
 à 4.—Hallelujah in G (3/4). n.d. *E.C.*  
 à 4.—Hallelujah in G (4/4). n.d. *E.C.*

*Violin Music.*

- Adagio and allegro in C. 1774. *B.M.*<sup>(19)</sup>  
 Slow movement in C. Written for Miss Augusta Smith. 1774. *B.M.*<sup>(19)</sup>  
 Movement (3/2) in A Minor. n.d. *B.M.*  
 Rondo in C. n.d. *B.M.*<sup>(19)</sup>  
 Largo in A Minor. n.d. *B.M.*<sup>(19)</sup>  
 Minuet in C. n.d. *B.M.*<sup>(19)</sup>  
 Adagio in D Minor. n.d. *B.M.*<sup>(19)</sup>  
 Two movements (2/4 and 6/8) in D. n.d. *B.M.*<sup>(19)</sup>

HENRY GEORGE FARMER.

<sup>(17)</sup> There are two versions of this.

<sup>(18)</sup> In the *Catalogue of MS. Music in the British Museum* (i, 119) the first name of the composer is given as [Rd.?).

<sup>(19)</sup> In the handwriting of the composer.

## SOME ASPECTS OF THE ARIA

Song in its simplest form is the spontaneous outburst of an exulting or sorrowing person. When the world seems either so light that nothing matters, or so heavy that it crushes, the tongue is released, and utters words, not in the natural tone of speech, but in the boundless range of music—joyous or sad. So King David, in his distress, cried unto the Lord with his voice; while in his happiness he praised Him with his whole heart. So Cavour, seeing the Austrians walking into his trap, shouted 'Di quella pira' from his window in tuneless enthusiasm. So too Desdemona murmured the 'Willow Song' in her suffering resignation to fate.

These are the greatest songs, squeezed out of the heart and filled with the spirit of sincerity; pure songs, irrepressibly uttered, composed without thought or labour, sung without care or consciousness. For surely Cavour's rendering of Verdi's aria was worth more than all the versions of C-gifted Carusos, and Desdemona's song came from Shakespeare's soul more readily than any of the dainty trifles with which he decorated his other plays.

But when a song is written objectively, as an instrument to arouse, as 'La Marseillaise,' or to terrify, as 'Erl-könig,' it loses its purity, turning from strength itself into a mere weapon, to be wielded for effect. David's cry to Jahveh is for ever a cry, but 'La Marseillaise' will stir none but the nation which has been taught to respond to it, and that perhaps not always.

In a world of speech, a song is always impressive. It stands out, and men will listen, because it is not ordinary. But in drama, where there is a ball rolling towards an end, and where a plot unfolds and destinies are reckoned, the intrusion of a song appears out of place, unless (as the Willow Song) it heightens tension, or (as the Fool's utterances in Lear) it partially relieves it. Who has not experienced a sinking feeling in a cinema, as the heroine makes her way to an open piano? Who has not fidgeted, as after playing a few bars she has spurned the keyboard and accepted the support of an unseen orchestra instead? The song may be good; it is often very charming. But the audience is waiting, the plot is waiting. Everything is

brought to a standstill in useless abeyance to an unnecessary song. For the song is out of its element.

On the one extreme, then, song must be spontaneous and natural to be pure, and not thrust bluntly into another sphere of art. In opera we find the very opposite situation. Here song, far from being isolated, is embedded in what should be its own element—words and music. How effective is it?

Originally, opera was merely an excuse to thread together a collection of songs. That they could best be linked with a story is obvious enough. The evolution is as simple as that of the Greek Drama or the Miracle Play. Artificiality was unavoidable, but success was sure if the songs were good. Eurydice could be called back from Hades for an encore, while Orpheus need register no emotion whatsoever at her reappearance. The song was the thing; the play a peg to accommodate it.

But opera had to develop, as all the other arts, and likewise realism had to creep in. As Euripides brought Greek tragedy nearer to the people, and Wordsworth lowered English poetry to within the grasp of everyone, so Mozart, Rossini and Weber removed Gluck from his pedestal, and into the opera there grew such realistic things as romance and comedy. Very soon it was contaminated by sleep-walkers, ship-wrecks, Roundheads, Druids, Crusaders and other material effects. Into the stage of Augustan purity came shoemakers and hunchbacks, gipsies and courtesans, policemen and naval officers, monks and Chinamen. But they were all legitimate descendants of Orpheus, Alcestis and Iphigenia in one sense—they all sang songs just the same; only, instead of the songs being obviously artificial, and therefore charming, they tried to appear natural, and frequently became merely absurd.

But the real difference between classical and romantic operas is not the difference between mythology and melodrama; it is that in the former the songs were written for the singer, while in the latter they were written for the story. As long as the audiences were contented to hear brilliant pyrotechnics, all they asked in the way of realism was fancy dress and some scenery. But when the scenery became more elaborate, the dresses more striking, and the stories more absorbing, the régime of the voice waned and passed away, and the composers, and not the singers, became the gods.

Rossini harnessed his singers, and held the reins tight. He allowed frills and cadenzas, but he wrote them himself. Verdi soon abolished the cadenza, as he had dramatic sense, with which it interfered. But he retained the aria because he was a melodist, just as Wagner,

being a symphonist, dropped it. But with the aria one thing is inevitable; it takes time to sing. And the time it takes must of necessity retard the plot. It is not as blatant an impediment as the song of the film-star, for there is music throughout opera, so that it does not come as a shock. But it does hold up the drama. Let us try to excuse it.

Before condemning an aria, it is advisable in the first place to trace it to its literary origin. The plots of operas are for the most part based on famous plays or novels. If an aria is an obvious interpolation by the composer, having no place in the dramatic order, it is probably detrimental to the plot. Thus the famous song, 'Even Bravest Heart May Swell,' added by Gounod to his 'Faust' for Santley to sing, has no power or usefulness, adds nothing to the story and delays a great deal. The very opposite to this is the exquisite 'In quelle trine morbide' in Puccini's 'Manon Lescaut,' which, although it likewise leads nowhere, is woven smoothly into the score and passes swiftly and yet with a wistful sweetness that makes us long to reach out and retain it for an instant. But in neither song is there a vestige of dramatic force.

But let us look at Verdi's 'Caro Nome.' This is an aria beloved of sopranis, and exploited alike by Melbas and struggling students. It has a simple melody, and the decorations, if not easy to sing, are simple to the ear. The whole atmosphere of it is one of artless innocence, a little pensive, a little happy, but very modest. The source of it is merely a half-whispered sentence.

' Gaucher Mahiet! nom de celui que j'aime,  
Grave-toi dans mon coeur! '

In the opera it is nothing more than,

' Gualtier Maldè . . . nome di lui si amato  
Scolpisciti nel core innamorato! '

But the power of music to paint emotion is employed after these words by means of the short aria, which does not arrest the drama, but, as it were, photographs indelibly for us the innocent excitement of Gilda, leaving a lasting impression of the happiness we are not again to see, for her abduction follows almost at once. Together there pass away the purity of the melody and the simplicity of the girl. The music depicts the delicate shades of soliloquy and fancy more tenderly than recited lines. Take for instance the not dissimilar

scene in 'Romeo and Juliet,' in which Juliet stands at her window and communes with herself about her lover's unfortunate family;

' O! be some other name:  
What's in a name? that which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet;  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;  
And for that name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.'

Which for all its beauty is a very elaborate way of saying (as an American film-heroine I heard the other evening), 'Gee! I don't care who you are, or what you are. I'm just crazy about you, and that's enough' which is far more natural than the speech of Juliet. The poetry of Shakespeare may be too inspired for a simple maid to utter in reality; but the music of an opera is not meant to come from the singer; it is employed to describe, from without, the mood of the character. The poetry of drama must come from within the character, whereas the music of opera can only be externally applied. The dramatist creates his characters; the musician illustrates his. For his expressions of romantic imagination such as

' It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper,'

Professor Bradley describes Othello (not Shakespeare) as romantic. But we cannot *describe* Gilda as pure and innocent because of 'Caro Nome'; she is that already, and so 'Caro Nome' is what she sings. But it is Verdi's—not hers.

Another aria from 'Rigoletto' that is interesting is the famous 'La Donna è Mobile.' The only weakness it has is that the tune is too great. To be this, a tune has not only to be popular, but perennial. Verdi knew that he had excelled himself, and reserved the music from rehearsal until the last moment, lest its simplicity and immediate appeal should cause it to spread prematurely round the city. As melody it will always bring applause, whether sung on the concert-platform or played in a restaurant. But its tunefulness and rhythm are only accessories to its real greatness, for it is, in its setting, an intensely dramatic piece. Just as 'Caro Nome' gives us Gilda's wistful simplicity, so 'La Donna è Mobile' shows us the reckless libertinism of the Duke, and his spirited selfishness. But it is not sung for us; it is sung so that the faithful Gilda may be disillusioned, for she overhears it. The song appears three times, and in each case it is dramatic. The first time, when it is sung in



full, it shows the eavesdropping Gilda that she is not loved by her idol. Later it is sung dreamily by the Duke as he goes to sleep. This time he does not finish it, for sleep overtakes him and the clarinet takes up his part. His last thoughts are light, and he is very near death. At the end of the opera the song appears in its most dramatic situation, sung by the Duke departing in the distance, and thus revealing to the triumphing Rigoletto that he has not the right victim in his sack.

The words of this aria are taken from the original play. Victor Hugo's King Francis sings,

' Souvent femme varie  
Bien fol est qui s'y fie.  
Une femme souvent  
N'est qu'une plume au vent ! '

Verdi's Duke of Mantua sings,

' La donna è mobile  
Qual pium'al vento  
Muta d'accento  
E di pensiero.'

In the play Francis does not sing it as he retires to bed, as the Duke does. But in each case it is obvious that some popular and ephemeral ditty that has got into his head—as they do—and which he sings entirely carelessly, as one sings when life is good. The words themselves are not incriminating; many a faithful husband may have sung them without losing his reputation; but the circumstances in which the Duke sings them, as he flirts with the barmaid, reveal his character to Gilda. That is the dramatic strength of the aria. From the point of view of the actual melody anything from 'Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay' to 'Sonny Boy' would have done. All the Duke has to do is to sing a ditty and repeat it off-stage at the end to make the hunch-back open the sack. In the play any song would have served the purpose, but in the opera, where all is music, a really distinctive melody was necessary, and Verdi knew this. Hence the supreme tune that caught the whole world with its swing—a tune that is really too supreme. 'La Donna è Mobile' does not portray the Duke's character; it is a dramatic instrument, and is very effectively used. It depends entirely on its introduction at the crucial moment, and is in this way as strong as any of Wagner's motives. But first and last it remains a simple aria da capo.

Let us now examine another of Verdi's arias, one entirely opposite in character—'Di Quella Pira' from 'Il Trovatore.' The force of

this song is entirely in the music, and not in the situation. Manrico and Leonora have at last, after the storms of the first two acts, found some peace in which to talk of love; but suddenly there comes a messenger to tell Manrico that his mother has been captured and is to be burnt. Instead of rushing to her rescue he remains to sing the aria, whose music is bursting with robust, martial effort. But the effort is in vain, as Manrico only stands still and sings. Why does he not run out with a wild cry? He knows how urgently he is wanted, because he is saying so. But he shows no inclination to move. Indeed, in the original score, the aria is set down twice, and without any high C's. Revolution has cut out the second verse, and added the top-notes, and this makes it more thrilling—but still he delays. It is inexcusable, dramatically; there is no reason why he should wait, just to sing about doing what he ought to be doing. He has acted in the same manner already; for on receiving news up in the mountains that Leonora is about to take the veil he has gripped his sword and sung a duet with Azucena—

' If a moment I but linger  
I may lose my dearest blessing,  
All that life itself most prizes,  
All that makes it worth possessing, ' etc.,

when he should be on his horse and away.

The reason is that in ' *Il Trovatore* ' there is nothing very logical. It is a tremendous collection of first-class tunes, but dramatic truth is not particularly observed anywhere. The delay of Manrico is not the delay of Hamlet, who can call his uncle

' Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain! '

and yet confess himself to be ' pigeon-liver'd '; who can stand with his sword behind his kneeling enemy, saying

' Now might I do it pat, '

and yet put up his sword and depart, with words that sound much more like an excuse than genuine hatred. But just as Hamlet's delay costs him his life, so does Manrico's; and yet Manrico does not delay because he is ' pigeon-liver'd '—he is obviously anything but that—he delays merely to sing a song (perhaps because he has been masquerading as a troubadour!), and his enemy captures him. Yet despite the stupidity of his behaviour, is there any audience that would willingly sit through the scene, knowing that ' *Di Quella Pira* ' was to be omitted? Surely not; and the reason is the superabundance of melody of the opera—such an orgy of robust tunes that logic seems

a minor matter. Dramatically, Verdi has retrogressed, but his inspiration atones for it. Brute force is his weapon here, rather like Webster's, and we are not invited to stop and ponder. For if we do, 'Di Quella Pira' becomes stupid; and who wishes to acknowledge that?

Another interesting type of aria is that which occurs in a death-scene. This is a very difficult part of an opera, for when Death visits one of the characters, we should be brought more close to stark reality than mere music has hitherto been able to carry us. The trouble is that dying and singing are not compatible. We can love, and sing sweetly; hate, and sing angrily; pray, and sing solemnly; but when it comes to dying, it is surely against all the canons of the 'will to live' that a sinking person should expend his ebbing energy in song. Yet the two cases usually cited as being the most flagrant are in reality the most natural—the famous consumption scenes of 'La Bohème' and 'La Traviata.' It seems far more excusable that a poor girl, dying inevitably of that terrible disease, should pluckily cheer her last moments by trying to be happy. I am not discussing the question of the seventeen-stone prima-donna—that is an altogether different limitation. But in each case the heroine has her lover at her side, and why should she not try to be happy at the last? To each it is obviously an heroic effort. To each there return memories of happier days, and is not that enough to bring a sense (if only a sense) of strength?

Surely far more theatrical and incongruous is the death-scene of the great Siegfried, who, after being well and properly stabbed in the back, sits up and sings for over three minutes. He too sings of love, and it is possible that we will all think of that when we are dying, but it is a mistake on Wagner's part—especially Wagner, whose orchestra, without any aid from the libretto, could describe the situation very deeply. This type of illogicality is not uncommon in drama. Peele's Absalom speaks over sixty lines of blank verse while hanging from a tree by his hair. Shakespeare's Antony speaks his greatest lines when he ought to be dead. The operatic hero generally has time for a swan-song—Tristan takes an act to die, Gilda gets out of a sack to sing, before suffocation and loss of blood have their way. Indeed, it is a relief to see Siegmund and Hunding simultaneously struck down, and Mario Cavaradossi shot dead at once (especially this latter, when one considers Puccini's usual sentimental death scenes).

A favourite peg on which to hang an aria is the prayer, and in this too conventionality gives way to realism. A prayer is a very private

utterance—an absolute secret between man and God, and the moment of prayer is a quiet and intense moment. This naturally gives scope to the composer, who brings into play his most simple and solemn music. Of this kind is the gentle, 'mezza voce' opening of 'Casta Diva' in Bellini's 'Norma.' But there is in it none of the intimacy of prayer; the piece is very difficult to sing, the cadenza is brilliant, and the pianissimo chorus is soothing—but there is nothing of genuine reverence. It ought not to be hard to pray—but it is hard for Norma to do so amid a maze of coloratura trappings. Besides, convention demanded a cabaletta—so she has to give us one, and it comes as a rude shock after her quiet beginning. Admittedly it is a pagan prayer—but there should no less be reverence.

Our hearts should be uplifted by a prayer scene—and only absolute simplicity can do this. Intricacy demands mental alertness, but prayer calls for mental surrender. That of Elisabeth in 'Tannhäuser' is a far better passage, being pure and lovely, not obscured by orchestral accompaniment or Wagnerian novelty. Utterly simple, it is utterly beautiful. In the second act of 'La Forza del Destino' is another great prayer—sung by Leonora outside the monastery gates. The effectiveness of this depends on whether the soprano delivers it on her knees or erect before the footlights (one sees both). Sung by a kneeling heroine the music soars away from earth—and we forget it is only an aria, believing that the heavens may open at any moment, and an angel relieve her burden. This is the sort of aria that can be entirely static; for while someone prays, time waits, and the audience must not breathe. But above all, it must not clap (though it frequently does), for there is only one thing more ill-mannered than the applauding of a person's devotions, and that is calling for them to be repeated. The moments of prayer in opera should be allowed to pass in silence and reverence. In the last scene of Verdi's 'Otello' there is a famous and beautiful 'Ave Maria,' sung by Desdemona after the willow-song. It serves to prolong our agony—to make us love more than ever the girl whom we know to be on the threshold of a cruel death. Very different is this simple aria from the florid 'Casta Diva.' The first four lines are intoned quietly on one note, a short melody creeps into the middle, and departs, and the last sentences are only whispered. To such realism has the aria arrived, that Desdemona is allowed to commune with her own soul, while the orchestra alone speaks. The prayer of Elisabeth is beautiful for its form and melody, that of Leonora for its form and dramatic importance, but Desdemona's for the loveliness it suggests and the web of reverence and pity that it weaves before our eyes. And we

know that the 'black ram' lurks savagely without. It is a far, far cry to the old cavatina—cabaletta pattern.

But even this old two-movement form could be used logically. In the old arias the quick movement was expected to follow the slow one, and invariably did so, often contrary to reason. Even Verdi employed the cabaletta artlessly. 'Ernani, Ernani Involami' is followed by a bright movement that is utterly incongruous, but a joy to hear. 'Tacea la Notte al Placido' has in attendance a whirling cabaletta of little musical value and no dramatic sense. But Verdi used the cabaletta occasionally to denote that a change had come over the character's mood. Thus in the aria 'Ah! Fors' è lui' Violetta sings pensively of her awakening love—and then having decided that love is not for courtesans exclaims

'Follie! Follie!'

and plunges into a swift and reckless song that is really the conventional cabaletta used with a psychological fitness. Likewise Don Carlo in 'La Forza del Destino', on finding his sister's portrait in Alvaro's valise, jumps from his reverie into a furious song of angry triumph. The value of this scene is that the two parts of the aria are sung by a man in two different mental conditions—and the music portrays the change most accurately.

But the cabaletta died very hard; indeed, it may be traced in all musical climaxes, however remote it may at first appear. The final exultant phrases of the love duet in 'Tristan und Isolde' are but the bars of the cabaletta pendant on the slow movement that forms the main part. What is the finale to 'Siegfried' but pure Italian cabaletta? Wagner could not avoid it—it took Puccini to do that, whose arias are all languorous and 'lento.' The love duet of Siegfried and Brünnhilde is only a thinly disguised model of the form we know so well in the love scenes of 'Un Ballo in Maschera' and 'Aida.' The end of the latter Mr. Francis Toye describes as 'very nearly a cabaletta. But what a cabaletta!' So can 'Siegfried's' finale be described. Even if the climax of the 'Preislied' is unique, it is *the* aria 'par excellence' not by beauty or reputation, but by design, it is written for a prize, and must therefore be prize-worthy. Its manufacture is shown to us, and so the finished article must reach perfection. Its final execution is Wagner's greatest relapse (or advance?) into real opera, for it is an aria da capo—a repeated cavatina, with a cabaletta to follow—but it is Wagnerian, so made of one texture. Its verses are interspersed with comments as naïve as those of a Greek chorus—or a Donizettian one. It is in fact pure operatic canto. But where its weakness lies is in the number of

times we hear it throughout the work; for we witness the growth of it from first inspiration to final perfection; we hear it embellished, polished and adjusted, so that its appearance at the climax is not very sensational to us, whereas it is intended to sweep the Nuremberg populace off its feet. We, having heard its very inception, cannot enthuse quite in the manner of the Masters, to whom it is new and wonderful. But if we are disappointed at missing the tremendous climax, it is our own fault for having stupidly tried to identify ourselves with the crowd, when Wagner has given us the opportunity to be Hans Sachs instead—an invitation which it is folly to refuse.

We ought not, however, to be disappointed at the final rendering of the Prize Song, if we have followed its development keenly. Knowing its finished form is no handicap; rather can we profit by that in our enjoyment of its growth. It rises superbly out of the meshes and trammels of the Guild's conventionality, and soars away on the wings of white-hot inspiration. How like Coleridge's great dream was Walther's!

‘ Oh, hallowed day  
On which my poet's dream took flight!  
That Paradise my vision showed  
Revealed anew in Heaven's light  
Shining now lay  
Thereto pointing, a laughing streamlet flowed,  
And gleaming yonder  
A radiant wonder,  
The garden's maiden so fair  
As Muse before me stood  
In holy calmness there;’ etc.

In the resistless boundlessness of a flashing dream Walther stands before the assembled people and builds his dome of music into the air, and we are transported from Nuremberg and the Pegnitz to Xanadu and the sacred river, Alph. Even when we do come back to earth and the theatre to hear old Sachs praising

‘ die heilige deutsche Kunst,’

we cannot forget the wonderful aria, but we must say to ourselves, as Sachs turned and said to Eva,

‘ Hark, child, that is a Mastersong.’



## CHURCH CHOIRS IN HISTORY

To one as unversed in ethnology as the writer it would seem that, with the exception of cantillations by groups of priests, church choirs owe their origin to the Jews as regards both men, women, and boys, or, possibly, share it with the Greeks.

The first choir of which we read, at least in the Hebrew Scriptures, and personally I know of no earlier record, was evidently a mixed one, 'Moses and the children of Israel'; the next was of women only—Miriam (the first vocal soloist whose name we know) and her maidens; the third also was of women, who 'came out of all cities of Israel, singing . . . to meet Saul'; the fourth was of men only (apparently) but was the nucleus of one which ultimately included boys—that of the tabernacle at Jerusalem (1 Chron. xvi. 4). The Talmud tells us that the choir of the second Temple consisted of not less than twelve adult Levites. Nine of these played the instrument called the kinnor (lyre?), two the nebel (lute?), while the remaining one beat the selselim (cymbals). No statement is made as to the number of singers whom the musicians accompanied, and from this Grätz infers that the instrumental and vocal music was performed by the same persons (as none of the instruments mentioned were wind instruments, this would be quite practicable). The Talmud also gives us the extremely interesting information that in the Second Temple boys' voices were called in to modify the deep bass of the men's voices. The choir-boys did not stand on the platform with the Levites, but lower down, so that their heads were on a level with the feet of the Levites. They were sons of persons of rank in Jerusalem. (It does not necessarily follow from this fact that the Jews were the first to discover the possibilities of boys' voices: Greek drama dates back to as early a period as the Second Temple, and at one time, if not in the days of Thespis, children formed part of the chorus; and so important was the part they played that conscription was resorted to when necessary to provide them: the parents might consent if they chose, but the children were taken whether they did or not. As the drama is said to have been the outcome of religious mysteries, and was itself regarded as sacred, we cannot safely conclude

that the employment of boys' voices even in divine service was a monopoly of the Jews.)

This exclusion of women would appear to have been due to some religious feeling which had developed in the four hundred and fifty years which, accepting Usher's chronology, had elapsed since Miriam had taken a leading part in the public service of praise; that the exclusion was due to the sacred character of the service and (perhaps more particularly) of the building in which it was held, is evidenced by the fact that David's own *palace* choir consisted of both 'singing men and singing women' (ii Samuel, xix. 33-5). Whether this sex-ban was relaxed on the return from captivity by the admission of women to the choir is not certain, but Peritz concludes that it was, from Neh. vii. 67. Is one to understand that the two hundred and forty-five singing men and singing women mentioned by Ezra and Nehemiah had been organised as a choir in the land of their captivity? I take it to be so, and in this case it would greatly help towards a solution of the problem, and answer an exceedingly interesting question if it could be shown in what way this choir functioned in Babylon: did they 'sing the Lord's song in a strange land' or merely officiate at their captors' banquets, as David's palace choir had done at his? It affords a painful confirmation of this latter view that owing to their musical aptitude Jewish girls fetched a higher price in the slave markets of Greece and Rome than those from any other country did. But whether we hold one view or the other as to the constitution of the Temple choir after the return from captivity, the rule confining the choir to men, on the institution of the tabernacle services, is interesting as the first instance of a restriction which was re-enacted in the Christian church some 1,400 years later (again using Usher's chronology); remained the practice of the church for over a thousand three hundred years; and is still observed in most Anglican cathedrals and many parish churches.

The view which we take will, however, determine whether we regard the admission of women to choirs as due to the Jewish church or the Christian: for it is clear that women were included in some at least of the early Christian church choirs, and if we rule Miriam's choir out of court on the ground that the church of her day was not sufficiently organised to determine the point, and if we disagree with Peritz as to women having been included in the Temple choir after the captivity, then the introduction of 'singing women' was a Christian innovation.

I should imagine that in the earliest days of Christianity there was no organised choir at all, but clearly choirs had appeared by

the third century and women were included in them, for Eusebius says 'there was a place appointed for those who sang psalms, youths and virgins, old men and young.' And one of the few things known about the Therapeutists, a sect of Christian ascetics prior to A.D. 300, is that they 'selected from the rest two choirs, one of men and one of women, who sang alternately.'

But the mixed choir in the Christian church was short-lived: in the oriental churches and in a few of the occident the singing was congregational—St. Augustine tells us how greatly he was impressed by that at Milan, for instance. But in A.D. 363 (one authority says 367) the Council of Laodicea decreed that 'none but those ordained as chanters shall sing in church.' This meant that with the exception occasionally of the Kyrie, or a vernacular hymn to the Virgin, or a vernacular carol, or one in which the vernacular and Latin were mixed (the use of which preceded the Reformation), the congregation was silenced as regards the sung part of the liturgy for something like twelve hundred years! For Milan and Rome were at variance on this matter. Rome followed—indeed, possibly she anticipated—the principle laid down at Laodicea, and to provide the necessary 'chanters' schools of church music were founded, it is believed by Pope Sylvester at the beginning of the fourth century, and certainly by St. Hilarius, between A.D. 461 and 468, the period of his pontificate. Later on under Pope Pelagius II (577-90) larger *Scholæ Cantorum* were established, and to his successor Gregory the Great we owe the Plainsong system, and to disciples of the school the spread of the method practically throughout Christendom. The Irish monks especially distinguished themselves as musical missionaries. Not only did choirs from this time till quite recent days consist of males only, but their members were regarded as a semi-clerical body. The head of the Roman *Scholæ Cantorum* till 1586 with one exception was a cleric (the exception was in 1464 when Nicolas Fabri, whom from his being Governor of Rome I take to have been a layman, was appointed). Of fourteen successive chiefs from 1469 onwards thirteen were bishops. Each member of a cathedral Chapter originally had a choral deputy to do choir-work for him, hence the terms used to the present day of minor canon, vicar choral, and lay-clerk, each implying a vicarious office (the first-named was necessarily a cleric, the second might be either clerical or lay, the third was necessarily a layman). In the *Scholæ Cantorum* the older students were allowed the courtesy-title of sub-deacon though not really holding this office.

It is in connection with these schools that we find the first mention

of boys as members of choirs in the Christian church. Lads were admitted to them at a very early age, and when their voices broke were either trained for the priesthood or became *Cubicularii*. Precisely what befell these latter I cannot say, and the priests may not all have become members of the Pontifical choir, but in later centuries all its adult members were supposed to be in Holy Orders. The rule, however, was not always strictly enforced: the choir's most distinguished member, Palestrina, was admitted in 1555 when married, dismissed the next year by a more rigid Pope (as were two other members, apparently for being laymen) and readmitted fifteen years afterwards, under a third Pope.

This system of schools as a means of providing sopranos for the choir became that of monasteries and cathedrals, and remains so in England to the present day. But in the Sistine Choir a momentous change was initiated about 1550: men possessing the voice known as *soprano falsetto* gradually took the place of the boy trebles. These men were imported from Spain where alone the secret of producing this class of voice was known. They must not be confused with the artificial sopranos whose voice was produced by a barbarous surgical operation. This class filled the theatres of Europe during the seventeenth and greater part of the eighteenth centuries (except in England where boys took the soprano parts in the English operas, though not in the Italian opera, introduced in 1710). This latter class of voice was sometimes the result of an accident, the first known instance occurring in 1601, and in this case they were admitted to church choirs. The plan of having adult male sopranos lasted till the pontificate of Pius IX (1846-78) when a return was made to the employment of boys' voices in both the Sistine chapel and other basilikas in Rome.

There were many private chapels in mediæval days, but in these the constitution of the choir would differ from that in cathedrals and monasteries only in there often being but one clerical member of the choir, and in the lay members acting in a dual capacity: they would occupy the minstrels' gallery on week-days and the choir-stalls on Sundays. As an example on a large scale reference may be made to the 'bands of musicians and trumpeters, and forty-two royal singers' who attended the churcing of Edward IV's queen at Westminster Abbey in 1466. This functioning of private orchestras and choirs has lasted almost to our own day: Haydn composed operas for his patron on week-days and masses for Sundays. There was a great rivalry between these royal and ducal choirs, and probably Richard III was not alone in having little scruple as to whom he got for his choir, or how he

got them, provided he got the best there were: he empowered John Melynek, one of the gentlemen of his Chapel, 'to take and seize for the king' not only boys but also 'all such singing men expert in the science of music, as he could find and think able to do the king's service, in all places of the realm, as well cathedral churches, colleges, chapels, houses of religion, and all other franchised or exempt places, or elsewhere' (Harl. MS. 433, p. 189). The conscription of boys for their voices was quite common in the fifteenth century—as we have seen it had been among the Greeks—Orlando Lassus the great Belgian composer as a lad was kidnapped three times! and in England, though confined to certain churches, it lasted till the days of Queen Elizabeth; but Richard III is the only monarch I am aware of who included men in the terms of conscription.

The most knotty problem is as to the constitution of choirs in parish churches, especially the smaller ones, in the Middle Ages. Quite probably in many of them there was no choir at all, the singing being done by the priest, of whose training liturgical music formed an integral part. Or the priest and a choir of boys may have sustained a responsorial service. Choirs of boys only were very common: for instance, when Thomas à Becket visited Paris about 1159 he entered the French towns 'preceded by two hundred and fifty boys on foot, in groups of six, ten, or more together, singing English songs according to the custom of the country'; and when Henry V returned from his victory at Agincourt 'boys with pleasing voices were placed in artificial turrets singing verses in his praise' (which he stopped, saying that God alone should be praised). Then, again, choirs, like the small 'portative' organs, were moved about from one church to another: as an instance the case may be cited of eight priests being hired from Coventry in 1441 to assist in celebrating a yearly obit in the neighbouring priory of Martoke. Six minstrels accompanied the priests, to sing, harp, and play in the hall of the monastery during the repast which followed. The priests were paid two shillings each and the minstrels four shillings and the latter had a private repast in the 'painted chamber' with the sub-prior after their performance. This was the customary relative rate of pay and occasioned much heart-burning. (If anything, the Coventry clerics had received more than usual, for in the same year a friar who preached in the same monastery received only sixpence for his sermon!) These six minstrels belonged to Lord Clinton's household and may have formed his private choir. As an example of such choirs that which Lord Howard maintained from 1481-5 may be taken: it

consisted of Nicholas Stapylton, William Lyndsey and 'little Richard' as singers, 'Thomas the harper,' and the 'children of the chapel' who varied from four to six in number. My suggestion is that such choirs may sometimes have been lent to the parish churches. The larger towns, too, had their municipal bands of musicians: these were primarily instrumentalists but being trained in the art may have assisted vocally in services on Sundays.

No great change came till the Reformation when the adoption of the vernacular as the language of worship, and of metrical psalms in place of timeless Gregorian chants, inaugurated congregational singing as we know it to-day.

But this did not affect the constitution of choirs. Women were not readmitted to the singers' stalls for some hundred and twenty years after the issue of the famous Genevan psalter of 1542—the 'Psalm-book of the Reformation' it has been called—and their admission then can only be inferred. And boys held a monopoly of the soprano parts in non-congregational works such as oratorios for more than a century after this assumed approximate date. Obviously, then, the objection to women in choirs was not confined to the pre-reformation church. One of the many rebukes which that good Lutheran, John Sebastian Bach, received from his ecclesiastical superiors was for admitting 'a strange lady' into the choir and allowing her to 'make music' (which probably meant, play the organ). This was in 1706, and the 'strange lady' was in all probability his cousin Barbara Bach whom he afterwards married.

Nor was this restriction confined to the church: there were no women among the Troubadours (eleventh to thirteenth centuries), or the Minnesingers or Meistersingers who followed them, nor originally in the Eistedfodd, nor in the many musical societies which existed in England and Scotland in the eighteenth century.

Yet from the earliest times we have evidence of woman's activity in things musical. And if this suggests her playing instruments much more than singing, it is largely because the evidence is pictorial, and it is easier to represent an instrument than the voice. In *written* evidence we have references to vocal activities: thus Dekker in *The Gull's Horn-book* tells us that the usual routine of a young gentlewoman's education was 'to read and write; to play upon the virginals, lute, and cittern; and to read prick-song (i.e., written music) at first sight'; and Lazarillo is even more emphatic: 'It shall be your first and finest praise to sing the note of every new fashion at sight.'

Why, then, were women not admitted to choirs? The answer is,



I think, comparatively simple: there was no objection to women either singing or playing an instrument, but there was a deeply rooted, almost world-wide, and age-long objection to their doing so—or almost anything else—in public. For her to do so was to brand herself as, at best, of questionable character. For this reason all women's parts in Shakespeare's plays were acted by men or boys. And though women took part in masques and the earliest Italian operas it was because these were given in private houses and grounds; even in the masques boys took the singing parts,<sup>(1)</sup> as they did in the *English* operas which followed them. In Italy women took part in the first operas which were given in the theatres, but their doing so was afterwards prohibited by Pope Innocent XI (1667-91). Dean Swift summed up English mentality on the subject when he called Margaret de l'Eprino, the honoured wife of Dr. Pepusch, 'a drab,' apparently for no worse reason than that she was a professional vocalist! No wonder, then, that only those women sang in public who were driven to do so as a means of livelihood, or were lured by the huge fortunes sometimes to be made thereby. This explains the anomaly that while the solos in many of Handel's oratorios, requiring professionals, were sung by women, the treble chorus parts were sung by boys.

This social stigma was not lifted till 1779, and it was Dr. Arne's oratorio *Judith* which had the honour of being the first work of that kind in which the chorus was sung by women. The date was February 26th in the year named, and the place was Covent Garden Theatre. The first time the same thing occurred in a church was eleven years later at the Handel Centenary in Westminster Abbey (it should have been in 1785 but a mistake of a year was made). On this occasion women assisted the boys in the treble parts of the choruses.

Was this, then, the first time that a mixed choir had sung in a church? In oratorios, apparently, yes, but in regard to ordinary services, though the evidence is very scanty, my own opinion is that mixed choirs—men and women—had appeared just about a century earlier. The first of the non-episcopal churches, which I take to have been the Brownists or Independents, had appeared about a century earlier still, but in these there probably was no choir separated from the congregation at all, and when, much later on, there was a choir it would certainly be a mixed one. But the choirs of the Anglican church had been disbanded during the Commonwealth and

(1) Some readers may recall Ben Jonson's lament for the lad for whom 'Death itself was sorry.'

at the Restoration there were no boys available. In cathedrals, till boys could be trained—and this takes some time—the soprano part was played on a wooden instrument called a cornet which was supposed to resemble the human voice (it must not be confused with the modern instrument of that name). This instrument was also sometimes used in parish churches. Pepys liked it and was sorry when it was discontinued at St. Olave's, Hart Street. Unfortunately he does not tell us what took its place, but my own opinion is that in many cases women's voices would do so. And this view is confirmed by the fact that women were employed as organists at this period, the earliest known being Mrs. Mary Battell, to whom, before the church was burnt down, a memorial existed in All Saints' Church, Hertford, recording her services, 'gratis,' in that capacity. She died in 1698.

It would indeed be most interesting to know exactly which was the first mixed choir in modern times, for it inaugurated a most momentous change: in Roman Catholic churches a mixed choir in a west-end gallery is a very usual arrangement; in Anglican churches women have been introduced to choirs which were always surpliced; and in non-episcopal churches surplices have been introduced to choirs which always included women. These features are particularly in evidence in the British overseas Dominions. Nevertheless these changes, as is so often the case, are in the main merely an instance of history repeating itself; and with this swing-back to conditions under which Miriam would feel herself quite at home, this brief sketch may well end.

## JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU AS A MUSICIAN

### PART II

*Continued from January, 1936*

ONE must ask oneself—what is the real significance of the musical life of Jean Jacques Rousseau? and the answer, I think, is that there are several very different points of interest that arise out of his career.

In the first place that career is interesting, to the historian as well as to the musician, in providing one more instance, if it be needed, of the superficiality and lack of real technical equipment behind the pontifical pronouncements of the so called *philosophes*. As has been well said,<sup>(1)</sup> never have any self-styled *philosophers* been so unphilosophic as those of the period, and circle, of the *Encyclopédistes*. And it might with some truth be added that never has any self-styled musician—or musical critic—been so lacking in the essential grounding of musical education as Rousseau was. Not a few of his utterances bear witness to this fact. And it was with good reason that Rameau, in his controversy with him, showed all the disdain of an accomplished craftsman as well as an artist, for the irresponsible, if sometimes shrewd, utterances of one who, after all, was not much more than a self-taught and in many ways very superficial amateur.

It is not necessary here and now to give many instances of this musical insufficiency of Rousseau. But one may quote one or two examples. For instance his fanatical insistence on the value of melody as contrasted with the little worth, or complete uselessness, of harmony is clearly to a large extent the result of the defects of his musical hearing. This is shown by the article on *quartet* (or *quatuor*) in the *Dictionnaire de Musique*, where he says that since the ear can never really hear more than two voices at the same time, therefore the art of writing a quartet consists only in giving two of the voices always a sufficiently subdued *remplissage* while the others are saying something. And in fact he concludes by saying that, after all, ' Il n'y a point de vrais *quatuors*, ou ils ne valent rien ' (because,

(1) By Alfred Cobban in ' Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the 18th century.'

of course, four parts cannot be heard by Jean Jacques at once). His definition of *Fugue* reveals the same incapacity to follow several parts at a time. And he concludes, with regard to them, that 'Les Fugues, en général, rendent la Musique plus bruyante qu'agréable'; while one may compare with this another saying of his that 'La Musique . . . a perdu son énergie et sa force depuis l'invention du Contre-point.'

However, contempt for *Fugue* and *Counterpoint* is perhaps just excusable in an eighteenth century writer, even when he calls himself musical.<sup>(2)</sup> But Rousseau's remarks on Harmony are really too naïf, even for the eighteenth century, to be allowed to pass without one's feeling that they reveal an astonishing defect in his technical, nay even in his natural, musical equipment. He writes for instance a long and brilliant passage showing that neither birds nor beasts—the earth's *natural* creatures—nor the ancients or the Chinese—the world's most cultured inhabitants—ever sung otherwise than in unison—or had any idea of harmony: therefore it is of the decadence of the world: and, in short, 'Il est bien difficile de ne pas soupçonner que cette Harmonie n'est qu'une invention Gothique et barbare, dont nous ne nous fussions jamais avisés, si nous eussions été plus sensibles aux véritables beautés de l'Art, et à la Musique vraiment naturelle.' Rousseau's admiration for *nature* and for *the natural* is, of course, another well-known characteristic of his outlook. And here again the position, and the errors, of Rousseau are typical of the whole attitude of the *Encyclopédistes* and 'enlightened' philosophers. But Rousseau was blind, not only to the fact that the complex is not necessarily the unnatural—as witness, for instance, the elaborate political and social system of the bee-hive—but also to the fact that simple results (for which he so eagerly contended) are often only to be obtained by an art-ful, and often, from his point of view, very unnatural elaboration of means adapted to the end of securing an apparently effortless result.

The whole question of *the natural* and of *nature* is a vexed and many-sided one, into which one cannot enter here. One outstanding mistake of Rousseau and his followers, however, was to imagine that the uninstructed amateur can really attain to mastery or even to competence in an art, and so have the right to place himself on the

(2) Rousseau's childish outlook on music is also shown in his doctrine that in a duet the two singers should as much as possible sing alternately and not together.

(3) Vide J. Tiersot 'En fait Jean Jacques Rousseau représente, en musique, l'idée qui domine essentiellement l'ensemble de sa conception générale: il est l'homme de la nature.' 'Jean Jacques Rousseau . . .' p. 181.

same footing in criticism and perhaps even in achievement with the expert. But one must recognise another aspect of Rousseau's sponsoring of the idea of *nature* and of *the natural* in music, from which one obtains a much more favourable picture of him, and from which point of view, indeed, the idea of nature is of considerable value. For, after all, simplicity—the avoidance of mere complexity for its own sake, and the escape from academic (and even from Bohemian or suburban) formulæ—is incontestably of importance in musical progress, and (which is not always the same thing), in the pursuit of musical truth and beauty. And this need for simplicity, and for *nature*, is also very often—though not of course always—a need for melody.

There is a great deal to be said, then, for Rousseau's insistence upon melody. And especially is this felt to be so when we consider the circumstances of his time. It was a time when French music had very little melody, and when Italian music was full of it—for after all, are we not compelled to agree with Rousseau in his complaints of the lack of melody in the great Rameau<sup>(4)</sup> himself?—and Rousseau therefore, in making himself the arch-advocate of the Italian music, was surely doing a good work.

But it was in a wider sense still than in the matter of melody that Rousseau, with considerable insight, made himself the advocate at once of the *Italian music* (of the 'Bouffons') and of '*the natural*' in music—which, indeed, were one and the same. For Rousseau's party, that of the Italian music, serious and comic, but especially comic, stood for an enfranchisement of the opera from the old, rigid, and often stilted conventions of the past, and for a more natural stage—and a more natural type of subjects—and a more natural musical treatment of those subjects.

Why only represent gods and goddesses, heroes and kings in opera? And why not treat of familiar subjects, and of modern subjects—letting the music merge itself in the subject, and not remain a mere series of loosely connected arias and recitatives, mingled with ballets which were often only too obviously quite artificially forced upon the plot?

Rousseau's attitude, by the way, with regard to the question of production is well expressed in his *Dictionnaire de Musique*. 'On aurait pu retrancher de la pompe du spectacle,' he writes, 'autant qu'on ajoutait à l'intérêt de l'action; car plus on s'occupe des

<sup>(4)</sup> One notices this even in his masterpiece '*Castor and Pollux*,' which, compared with the Italians or with our own Purcell, is somewhat lacking in striking melody. And what a change from this to Rousseau's idol Gluck!

personnages, moins on est occupé des objets qui les entourent; mais il faut cependant que le lieu de la scène soit convenable aux acteurs qu'on y fait parler.' And he does not despise 'un beau palais, des jardins délicieux, de savantes ruines. . . .' (*Dict.*, p. 490).

But although Rousseau was amongst the first of his contemporaries to welcome that insistence upon the purely musical side of opera which was so noticeable in the tuneful Italians,<sup>(5)</sup> yet, at the same time, he is determined that music, once she has asserted her rightful claims in opera, shall not predominate over the 'poème' and the 'décoration' to an excessive extent—'Ce qui fait tout-à-fait oublier la Pièce et change le Spectacle en un véritable concert' he says.<sup>(6)</sup> And here again it is the *natural* that he has ever in his eye—and ear. And here, also, significantly enough, he joins hands with Gluck.

Meanwhile Rousseau's attitude towards the Ballet provides an excellent instance of this insistence of his upon the *natural*. For he would banish Ballets from the Opera itself, at any rate in tragedies, because he says they are not needed to explain the action—we have words for that—and because actually they only succeed in spoiling the action by diverting people's attention from the plot to the dancers, so that 'L'intérêt que le spectateur prend aux personnes le dispense d'en donner à la chose'; he would therefore only suffer a Ballet *after* the opera; and even then he would like it to mean something definite, and not be a mere display of virtuosity; for which reason it is necessary to 'établir la convention des gestes,' that is to say to make every movement have an intelligible significance. In all this Rousseau's worship of the natural may certainly be said to have been an advance upon the custom and opinion of his time.

Moreover the good side of this attitude in him is visible also in another direction—in his appreciation of plain song; concerning which 'Il faut,' he writes 'n'avoir, je ne dis pas aucune piété, mais je dis aucun goût, pour préférer dans les églises la musique (i.e., elaborate music) au Plain-Chant.'<sup>(7)</sup>

An intense insistence upon *nature* and upon the natural is, then, the most important feature in the musical outlook and influence of Rousseau; also, as we have seen, a certain superficiality is undoubtedly a feature of Rousseau as a musician. And yet this must not blind us to the undeniable elements of instinctive good taste, of refreshing common sense, of very considerable originality, and even of

(5) 'Les Vinci, les Leo, les Pergolèse . . .,' as he himself says, in his *Dictionnaire de musique*.

(6) *Dict. de Mus.* under the word *OPERA*.

(7) Rousseau would doubtless have appreciated the elaborate and eloquent panegyric on plain song in Huysman's 'En Route.'



genius which also appear in him. For if he was always something of the amateur in music he was yet an inspired amateur. Moreover there is something in his claim of the right of non-professional and of non-technically-equipped persons to pronounce opinions and even judgments upon questions of music and of the other arts—a claim strongly asserted by the 'philosophers' in general at this time.

But again Rousseau's musical career is interesting as giving us a picture of the musical life of his time—of people singing the cantatas of Clérambault in provincial châteaux, of the cathedral choir of Turin chanting plain song, of people giving little operas in Parisian salons, of the court theatre at Fontainebleau divided into its two famous parts (supporting rival schools) of the *coin du roi* and the *coin de la reine*—of the ferment that arose over the *Guerre des Bouffons* and over his own part in it—in short of the musical life of Paris, of the country houses of the day, of the bourgeois of the Swiss cantons, and of Italy itself. We are shown the opera at Venice, for instance, and how people slept at it, and how Jean Jacques slept at it himself; and—which is still more interesting—we are shown (also at Venice) those famous charitable institutions—part convents, part orphanages, part academies of music—of which Burney has written so eloquently in his history. We see also how accessible was music, in the Italy of that day, to enthusiastic amateurs.

La musique en Italie coûte si peu de chose (he writes) que ce n'est pas la peine de s'en faire faute quand on a du goût pour elle. Je louai un clavecin, et pour un petit écu j'avais chez moi quatre ou cinq symphonistes, avec lesquels je m'exerçais une fois la semaine à exécuter les morceaux qui m'avaient fait le plus de plaisir à l'Opéra. J'y fis essayer aussi quelques symphonies de mes *Muses galantes*.

And there are many little touches like this throughout the *Confessions*, which make it an interesting document for the musical history of the time.

Of course Rousseau's absurd vanity and self-complacency are also fully exemplified in his writings on music, and in his remarks about his own music<sup>(8)</sup>. No doubt he very greatly exaggerated his own

(8) For instance, speaking of his rearranging and partly rewriting 'La Princesse de Navarre,' the words of which were by Voltaire, the music by Rameau, Rousseau, who was commissioned to make additions to the words as well as to the music, says '... dans ce travail ingrat je me tiens presque toujours à côté de mes modèles: ' and again, apropos of the music only, 'le public ne l'avait pas distingué de celui de Rameau: ' and yet again, apropos of the new recitatives, 'Je réussis à ce récitatif. Il était bien accentué, plein d'énergie, et surtout excellemment modulé. L'idée des deux hommes supérieurs auxquels on m'associait m'avait élevé le génie.' Again of his 'Muses Galantes' he writes, '... mon travail inégal, et sans règle, était tantôt sublime et tantôt très plat, comme doit être celui de quiconque

importance as a composer, just as his biographer Monsier Tiersot has more recently often absurdly exaggerated it. And in this respect Rousseau's musical career throws an interesting sidelight on his general character. But at the same time Rousseau did not greatly exaggerate his own importance as a critic, and as a leader of taste, and as an influence, in various directions, on the thought and practice of his day. Nor, indeed, has that influence often been exaggerated by anyone; rather the reverse. It has usually been definitely under-estimated. And yet so great an authority as Dr. Hirschberger not only tells us that Rousseau displayed throughout his life a real passion for music, but also adds that—'sein musikalisches Gefühl aufs feinste ausgebildet war.'<sup>(9)</sup>

It could not have been without reason that, in the words of the same writer, 'Sein Genius hat der Weltanschauung des 18. Jahrhunderts ebenso wie den Musikbestrebungen Frankreichs den Stempel seines Geistes aufgeprägt.' One might deduce this merely from the existence of such an influence. But facts of greater detail go to support the same view: for instance the appreciative words of Goethe<sup>(10)</sup>; the influence of the 'Devin du Village' upon Mozart's 'Bastien and Bastienne,' and of 'Pygmalion' upon Mozart's unfinished melodrama 'Zaide'; the influence of Rousseau's writings upon Gluck; the influence of 'the return to Nature' upon Haydn and his successors; . . . all these illustrate the fact that Rousseau had certainly a very decided influence upon his contemporary artists.

Instances of his good sense with regard to opera have already been given. But one may add another, namely, his opinion that the songs, arias, etc., in an opera should never obtrude themselves as such—should never even appear to be songs, arias, etc., at all—but should merely be part of a great whole of musical-dramatic representation.

'L'on sentit que le chef d'œuvre de la Musique était de se faire oublier elle même; qu'en jettant le désordre et le trouble dans l'Ame du spectateur elle l'empêchait de distinguer les chants tendres et pathétiques d'une Heroine gémissante des vrais accents de la douleur. . . .'<sup>(11)</sup>

This is both new, for his time, and generally interesting. So are some of his remarks on the actual place of music among the arts and

ne s'élève que par quelques élans de génie et que la science ne soutient point.' Yet he had said earlier in his confessions 'Je n'avais pas abandonné la musique en cessant de l'enseigner; au contraire, j'en avais assez étudié la théorie pour pouvoir me regarder au moins comme savant dans cette partie.' (My italics.)

<sup>(9)</sup> He speaks elsewhere of seeing in Rousseau 'den musikalisch empfindenden Denker und den feinfühligsten Ästhetiker.'

<sup>(10)</sup> Already quoted apropos 'Pygmalion.'

<sup>(11)</sup> Dict. De Musique, p. 486.

especially the comparisons which he draws between music and painting. As, for instance, when he writes—

C'est un des grands avantages du musicien de pouvoir peindre les choses qu'on ne saurait entendre, tandis qu'il est impossible au peintre de peindre celles qu'on ne saurait voir;

Or as when he seems to be discussing programme music, and declares that music should not try to imitate directly that which has been first communicated through other mediums than those of the voice and the orchestra, but should translate them *freely* into the new medium.

But indeed Rousseau is always eloquent and nearly always interesting, even when he is in the wrong, and the greatest among his contemporaries seem to have realised this. Surely, therefore, we should not dismiss quite so lightly, as we usually tend to do, the figure of Rousseau the musician—the critic of music, the composer of '*Le Devin du Village*' and of '*Les Consolations de ma Vie*'—the 'musikalisch empfindenden Denker und den feinfühligsten Ästhetiker.' We may even bear in mind the words of a letter written by Dr. Charles Burney to his daughter Fanny on October 12th, 1806, in which he says :

Nor was I blind to Rousseau's eccentricities . . . and paradoxes in all things but music, in which his taste and views, particularly in dramatic music, were admirable; and supported with more wit, reason, and refinement, than by any writer on the subject, in any language which I am able to read.

For the rest, we may perhaps fitly end these notes with a true story which yet might well be treated as a parable. In the recent production from the Mallahide collection of Boswell MSS., which have been privately printed for Colonel Isham, one may read a long, vivid and amusing description by Boswell of his descent upon Rousseau during his Grand Tour, and of the several interviews which he had with him in his Swiss retreat. And at the end of the last of these interviews the following conversation took place :—

Boswell : ' Can I send you anything back ? '

Rousseau : ' A few pretty tunes from the opera. '

Boswell : ' By all means. Oh, I have had so much to say, that I have neglected to beg you to play me a tune. '

Rousseau : ' It's too late. '

Well, metaphorically speaking, let us be careful that we ourselves, also, in admiring Rousseau as a man of letters and as a political thinker, do not make the same mistake of forgetting to ask him ' to play us a tune. '

H. V. F. SOMERSET.

## THE FIRST MOTET WITH ENGLISH WORDS

THE part played by the Motet in the development of polyphonic music is both of interest and of importance. It is a descendant of the Organum, which flourished in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and whose text, being solely liturgical, was always in Latin. About the year 1200, however, a custom arose whereby the upper parts of the Organum, which was usually written in three parts, were provided with different words to those of the lowest part. For the time being, this new text continued to bear a close relation to the purely liturgical object of the composition; but it was not long before the influence of secular music made itself felt, with the result that non-Latin words, such as the refrains of Troubadours' songs, came to be used. Thus arose the 'classical' Motet of the later thirteenth century, with its typical juxtaposition of different languages.

The composer of the middle ages must have found it a little surprising that the vernacular was used for these pieces, and not the language of international culture. For this practice there are two reasons. First, the Motet quickly took first place in the musical life of the aristocracy, playing a rôle comparable to that of the chamber music of our own days. As an art-form it was aristocratic—comprehensible to the expert alone—and before long its original liturgical purpose was almost lost sight of. Second, a different type of Motet, religious in character, but not intended for use in Masses or in other parts of the liturgy, was composed to languages other than Latin. These Motets were used for devotional purposes in the home, and were sung by laymen as well as by the clergy. They were looked upon as spiritual songs, a cross, as it were, between purely sacred and purely secular music. Pieces of this kind were set in a more popular style than the others. Few laymen knew Latin; and the music as well as the words was written in a more easily understood form, which reconciled the artistic with the popular style.

The history of what we may call the 'vernacular' Motet has yet to be written. The earliest ones are found in France, and shortly afterwards they occur in Spain, Germany, Italy, and England. In this

article it is proposed to describe the earliest Motet set to English words, which now appears for the first time in print.

The Motet 'Worldes blisce / Domino' is preserved in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The composition is written on a fly-leaf of MS. 8. This MS. was mentioned, without comment, in W. H. Frere's 'Biblioteca Musico-Liturgica,' and M. R. James's Catalogue of MSS. in Corpus Christi College Library contains a description of it, including the English text. This is also included in the fine anthology 'English Lyrics of the XIII Century,' edited by Carleton Brown (No. 58, p. 114), who moreover had already included it in his 'Register of Middle English Verses' (No. 2685). It will be seen, therefore, that the words of this Motet are not unknown. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of the music. Henry Davey's words, written more than forty years ago, appear still to apply: 'Our historians of literature still display unpardonable ignorance of the early songs.' (Preface to the first edition of his History of English Music.) It is only fair to admit, however, that this ignorance is largely due to the notation, which is often highly complicated, and to the unusual musical form. But if only historians of music and literature would collaborate more closely, more satisfactory results would follow. The following analysis will, we hope, stimulate people's interest in old music, and assist them to appreciate the beauties of medieval art.

Our Motet was written in the second half of the thirteenth century; on the evidence of its musical notation it may be dated round about 1280. Friedrich Ludwig, the great German expert on medieval music, was the first to state that it may be regarded as the earliest known Motet set to English words. (G. Adler's 'Handbuch der Musikgeschichte,' 2nd Edition, p. 264.) I am obliged to Professor J. Handschin for kindly placing a photograph of the MS. at my disposal, and for this I take the opportunity of tendering my sincere thanks to him.

The Motet is written for two voices, the words of the Motetus being English, while the Tenor part is provided with one Latin word only: 'Domino.' We will first discuss the Tenor part.

Nearly all thirteenth century Motets were based on ecclesiastical melodies—usually the whole or part of a Gregorian tune. The choice of the *canto fermo* depended on the day on which the Motet was to be sung; thus, if it was Easter Day, a part of the solemn *Graduale* 'Haec dies quam fecit Dominus' would often be used. In the present case, although the Motet was not part of the service, yet the melody given to the Tenor part is liturgical. The word 'Domino' is really

part of the '*Benedicamus Domino*,' which is still sung at the end of Mass, or of Offices such as Lauds and Vespers. The tune of this *Benedicamus* appears in the Antiphony of the *Editio Vaticana* in an altered version only. But we find it in its identical form in the well-known English MS. Wolfenbüttel 677 (formerly Helmstedt 628),<sup>(1)</sup> a facsimile of which was published in full in the 'Publications of St. Andrew's University' (1931). Here the melody is given to the Tenor in a three-part Organum '*Benedicamus Domino*.' In the Corpus Christi College MS. the omission of the word '*Benedicamus*' appears to be a mere error, since the whole of the melody, and not only its second part, is used. Ex. 1 shows the Gregorian version of the melody according to the Wolfenbüttel MS., transposed a fourth higher:



EX. 1. Wolfenbüttel 677, Fol. 7, v-8, *Benedicamus Domino*.

Comparison of this melody with the Tenor part of 'Worldes blise' shows that the two are identical. The composer therefore had no great difficulty with the invention of the part; his task was, in fact, not one of invention, but of fitting an existing tune into a polyphonic setting. At first sight this would seem simple enough; but an analysis of the Tenor part will show that it is in fact a very complicated business.

One point regarding the technique of the thirteenth and fourteenth century Motet requires explanation. This is what is known as 'Isorhythm' (identity of rhythm), a term invented by Friedrich Ludwig to denote the striking fact that the Tenor part of these Motets was divided into sections, each of which was formed on precisely the same rhythmic pattern. To these sections the medieval theorists gave the name *Taleae*, i.e., 'Cuttings.' This system was a highly logical method of constructing a Tenor part, the rhythmical shape of which was based on arithmetical proportions. The Tenor part

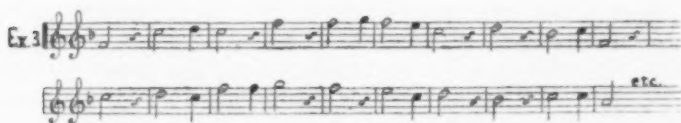
(1) See J. Handschin's two articles on the Wolfenbüttel MS. in the *Musical Times* of June, 1932, and August, 1933.





*Talea* conforms to the same isorhythmic scheme—in the present case the ratio of 3 bars to 4. The same ratio is also found in the bigger unit, the Period; and as the whole Period is sung three times, Period and Section are again found to be in this same ratio of 3 to 4.

In English and other Continental Motets, particularly of the fourteenth century, but also to some extent of the fifteenth, the Tenor part was often subject to augmentation or diminution in the repetitions of the Period. In such a case, for example, a canon might warn the singer that the values of all notes and rests were to be reduced by, say, a half or a third. Such repetitions in the isorhythmic Motet were known to the medieval theorist as *Color*. This term denotes the repetition of the same melody irrespective of rhythm. *Talea* and *Color* are thus contrasting conceptions. In the present Motet, *Color* appears in its most primitive form, since the Period is merely repeated twice without variation. This, however, is only one case among many. In bigger isorhythmic Motets, *Talea* and *Color* do not by any means always coincide. It may happen, for instance, that within the first Period four *Taleae* correspond to only three *Colores*. It is not in fact usual for the isorhythmic sections to agree with the caesuras of the melodic repetitions. Thus the term *Color* really has two meanings: one in the usual and narrower sense, which relates to the melodic repetition within the first Period, and the other in the wider sense, which relates to the repetition of the whole Period varied by augmentation or diminution. To give some slight idea of the complicated proportions of this construction, we may refer again to the *canto fermo* of the Tenor part. Here, it is true, use has not been made of real *Color*, but it is clear how completely the rhythm has been changed in the melodic repetition:



EX. 3. The melodic repetition within the Tenor part.

We have not marked the *Taleae* in Ex. 3. Comparison with Ex. 2 will show the difference. It was observed above that the repetition of A (we can speak more generally, and say the *Color*) is not perceptible to the ear, and the same applies to the *Talea*, the exact repetition of the rhythmic pattern of which is disguised by the uninterrupted flow of the melody. Neither the beginning nor the end of a Section or a Period can be distinguished. The form of the Motet

as a whole is not subject to the same rules as the Tenor part. Being accustomed to classical music, we should expect the Motet to have two formal caesuras, corresponding to the Periods. There is, however, only one, which occurs in bar 31. But here the double bar refers to the words, and not to the music, for '*Ha Jesu*' is the beginning of the second verse. This caesura has therefore no connection with the shape of the music, since the words are adapted purely mechanically to it. But this concerns the upper voice of the Motet, to which we now come.

The upper voice is generally called the '*Motetus*,' from which is derived the word '*Motet*'—the name of the type of composition. It means 'little word,' being a diminutive of the French '*mot*.' This has reference to the 'different words' that were given, in the Organum, to the Motetus, to be sung *ad libitum* instead of the original liturgical text. Later the Motetus part, often in conjunction with a third and higher part (the Triplum or Treble), became of more importance than the Tenor, which had hitherto been the real main part. It often happened that the Tenor part was only a single Melisma of a Gregorian melody, with the appropriate syllable of the text, such as '*Reg(nat)*.' Thus the text of the Tenor part came to consist of only one syllable, and for this reason it was deemed more suitable to give the part to an instrument. This is the origin of accompanied song.

The Tenor part of the present Motet shows no signs of the breaks that are so typical of isorhythmic parts. It may be sung as well as played on a stringed instrument. The Motetus, on the other hand, must be sung, for it is on this that the devotional character of the piece is mainly concentrated. It is indeed obvious at the first glance that the part must be performed vocally. The laws of ligature writing are strictly observed; whenever more than one note is sung to a syllable, the notes are tied. In the accompanying examples these ties are indicated by square brackets above the line. The musical declamation of the words is even and regular; the rhythm of the first, trochaic mode is clearly recognizable. There are no internal repetitions or ratios in the melody of the Motetus. Although in its counterpoint with the Tenor voice the same harmonies occur three times, the tune of the Motetus is not repeated. In later isorhythmic Motets it became the fashion to write the Motetus and the Triplum parts isorhythmically as well as the Tenor part, so that none of them were free. But in the present Motet neither the melody nor the text is hampered by *Color* or *Talea*. The whole piece maintains its even and regular motion. It may be observed that the melody bears a

slight resemblance to that of the Reading Rota; but this is doubtless helped by the identity of scale.

Finally we come to the harmony. The B flat converts the characteristics of the Lydian mode into those of the Ionian, which are maintained throughout. Most secular music was written in the latter mode, and Giraldus Barri, who wrote on English and Welsh music of the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, mentions songs '*sub B mollis dulcedine*,' by which is probably to be understood the conversion of the Lydian into the Ionian mode by the flattening of the B. In comparison with other Motets of the period the harmony of the present piece is truly '*dulcis*.' Thirds often occur, even in progressions of two. Here a strong likeness to the 'Gymel' style is to be observed, concerning which the author gave full particulars in MUSIC AND LETTERS (Vol. XVI, p. 77). 'Gymel' denotes a fondness for progressions of thirds and for the crossing of parts. This second peculiarity occurs frequently in the present Motet; and since in Motet-writing contrary motion was usually preferred to similar or oblique motion, this crossing of the parts, when the tessitura of the voices was the same, was a natural consequence. But it is primarily this predilection for thirds that enables us to say that 'Worldes blisse' is a Motet in the 'Gymel' style.

We may assume without much fear of contradiction that this Motet was not only written in England, but was also the work of an English composer. We know, of course, of several Motets with English words composed in France and later provided with English words. But in this case the internal evidence of its style shows that a foreign origin is at least highly improbable. The setting is popular from the point of view of the Motet, conventional from that of the 'Gymel.' At the beginning of this article it was stated that the words held the mean between the sacred and the secular, and the same applies to the music. True, it is impossible when speaking of medieval art to draw a distinct line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane. Although in this case the poet is saying farewell to earthly bliss, the harmony is gay and cheerful—a fact that will have made a 'blissful' impression on the hearts of the hearers. The Motet still retains its freshness. The composer must have been a skilled and well-trained musician. It is not for us to boggle at the few consecutive fifths and octaves that we find (in bars 27, 49, and 79 there are fifths, and in bar 61 an octave); these falls from grace may be regarded as relics of the Organum age.

Listening to the Motet as a whole we shall undoubtedly fail to distinguish the complicated system of 'ratios' upon which the Tenor

part is constructed. But the fact is that they were not intended to be heard in performance. The isorhythmic scheme was purely and simply a means of construction, the secrets of which were known only to the specialist. The 'ordinary listener' of the middle ages was satisfied with the knowledge that his Motet was written in accordance with the rules of the game. For him music was a matter for the intellect as well as the emotions. This equal ranking of *ratio* and *sensus* reveals to us the deeper meaning of medieval music-making and music-hearing. When we remember that this is the object in view, we cannot but admit that the Motet bears out this idea in a completely convincing manner. Its ordered construction, based on numerical proportions, is imperceptible to the ear, but not to the mind. Thus the Motet is a symbol of the belief that the chances and changes of life on earth are in truth controlled through God's inscrutable governance.

Exl.

Worlde blis - e have got day! Now from min her - to wand a - way; him

Da - na - di - ca - mas Da -

for to love-must have his went, yet for his si - de spe - ra rest, his

has to blood our - do for us, may - led to go hardy tra - pit

we - to be - di - was y - tend, for - nad and may - led pro - He jand pro bel

and wil escape per - nas am by wa - ved, for - na bel and al bi -

These two notes have been cut away in the MSS

spot, wyl spot and blod mygdal by-wyl. fra ꝑe c va-ne to ꝑe  
 to ꝑe body wylful of ꝑe-neu-uo, and wen and red ha-ge-  
 su ꝑe smarte ded be-sseld and my red frun de-voles  
 love, ha-ve-to ꝑe su, ꝑe here i for ꝑe-ne-pleas sore  
 thech mak-be-ryt love ꝑe 3me her-te blod wylssed for me.

*ms. 8 in the MS.*

EX. 4. Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS.8 (Flyleaf).

MANFRED BUKOFZER.

trans by G. D. H. PIDCOCK.



## THE SIXTH SYMPHONY OF SIBELIUS

THE belated esteem with which most of the seven symphonies of Sibelius are now regarded in this country has not so far been fully extended to the sixth of that remarkable series. Certainly it is the least frequently performed; and, taking all in all, it is probably the most recondite and baffling.

It is now possible—thanks to the enterprise of orchestral conductors, gramophone societies, and publishers of miniature scores—to obtain a view of Sibelius that is no longer distorted by partizan exaggeration or obscured by mists of half-knowledge. Our acquaintance with the composer has been placed on a more intimate basis, and the strangeness has worn off: we are no longer unduly stimulated or chilled by what seemed, at first, to be a singularly icy reception. The legend of the Finnish master's austerity and tongue-tied reserve died almost as soon as it was created. Soon we became, as it were, acclimatized to the comparatively rarefied atmosphere of his music, and discovered, somewhat to our amazement, that we are in no danger of being frozen.

Sibelius has already suffered severely at the hands of rabid apostles and sworn disparagers. We are, however, beginning to separate his swans and geese irrespective of the cries of rival instructors who would have us drive the entire flock into one pond or the other. In so vast an output as that of Sibelius, there are bound to be inequalities; but one requires no blind hero-worship to realize that, in the seven symphonies, he has—to adopt yet another figurative expression—forged a mighty chain in which there is no link of palpable and fatal weakness.

The symphonies of Sibelius are as different from one another as, collectively, they are different from all other music. If there are snatches which seem to be derivative—as in the first, third, and, most curiously, the sixth—they appear as twisted half-quotations, taken up and borne along in a torrent of highly original and powerful oratory. The first symphony, it is true, recalls Tchaikovsky at certain moments—by mannerisms which, however, are extraneous to the prevailing style. The second symphony bears more clearly the stamp of a strong individuality, although elements of traditional popularity remain. The third symphony represents the bridge upon which Sibelius finally passed from the world of old conventions into a domain

wherein he was bound only by his own laws. There is some hesitancy, even some insipidity, in the work: Sibelius looked back more than once, as though doubting his power to live a life of ordered liberty; but thereafter he was free. The remaining symphonies exhibit four phases of the full-grown artist.

The sixth symphony, even so, stands alone. It is curiously reserved, almost impassive—a 'fascinating study in half-tones, emotional and orchestral,' to borrow a phrase from the consideration of Sibelius in Mr. Constant Lambert's 'Music Ho!' The symphony radiates no vivid lights, nor does it clothe itself in any readily-defined atmosphere. The fourth symphony is heavy with a deep, grave melancholy: its brooding gloom is almost tangible. The fifth is charged with immense and joyous energy—the listener is gradually swept into a whirlwind that overrules all resistance. The seventh is rapturous and compelling: one moves on its wings to another plane, there to participate in wild and heady celebrations that seem, somehow, larger than life-size. If these three great works represent Sibelius in conflicting and urgent moods, the sixth symphony finds him in repose. Its withdrawn serenity is unique; the beauties are veiled, the treasures must be patiently sought.

Mr. Cecil Gray has pointed out that it is of Palestrina that 'one finds oneself thinking' in connection with the sixth symphony, and adds that the association of ideas is not based merely upon the modal flavour of much of the music. Sibelius, in an interview, stated that this archaism was quite unconsciously produced. The fact remains that the quiet opening, with its polyphonic texture, does indeed recall the rapt, exalted serenity of the old Italian master.

The tonal ambiguity persists throughout the greater part of the movement, and is in some degree a characteristic of the whole symphony. The tranquility is preserved until the finale. Apart from one brief outburst, which seems to anticipate the spiritual exultation of the seventh symphony, the first movement is calm and consolatory.

The succeeding Allegretto moderato is gracious and reserved. If one must cavil at the sixth symphony, the singular conclusion of this second movement provides an opportunity. Sibelius abruptly strikes off at a tangent, and enters a forest glade suspiciously like that of the second act of *Siegfried*. Before a murmuring background of strings there appear fragmentary wood-wind figures suggestive of the *waldvogel*. No definite return is made to the character of the opening; three final bars allude to it very briefly. This is one of the rare moments in Sibelius when we grope for his meaning, and end by wondering whether he means anything. The musical oratory of

Sibelius, we are frequently told by his apologists, is elliptical; he would scorn anything so superfluous as a conventional recapitulation. This terseness is admirable when, as is usually the case, Sibelius evolves an original pattern determined by the character of the material used. But the effect of the second movement of the sixth symphony is unsatisfying because Sibelius was conventional enough to employ a device derived from the venerable ABA, while he was wilful enough to avoid the logical conclusion. Tradition has no virtue *per se*: there is no inherent value in the ABA formula. But a palpable AB—or, to make the best of it, ABa—remains an unsymmetrical freak. If a conventional growth must be attacked, let it be uprooted with a spade, not lopped out of shape with a pruning knife.

The third movement, despite its scherzo-like appearance on paper, is all of a piece in spiritual character with the preceding movements. It remains singularly placid and undisturbed, notwithstanding the superficial energy of its progress; the rhythmic oneness produces a pleasant monotony. The movement is too brief for any tediousness to develop.

The finale opens at once in great rhythmic urgency. Soon we are swept into a genuine physical excitement, which becomes more and more intense. Sinews and muscles are at work. But suddenly the music is checked and diverted into a placid, tender chorale-like section that appears to have no thematic relationship to what has gone before. The conclusion is quiet in the extreme; the symphony fades away in wisps and murmurs of sound.

As familiarity with the sixth symphony increases, the good Sibelian begins to wonder whether he has not discovered in this music the fundamental Sibelius—surprised him, as it were, at an intimate moment, when no galvanizing emotion is clamouring for outlet. It stands, perhaps, for the tranquility of spirit that is characteristic of a strong and violent nature at a period of perfect balance and poise. There is something essentially unruffled about the whole work—at moments something so nonchalant and easy-going that it almost deserves to be described as perfunctory. Not even the rhythmical energy of the finale is allowed to come to a head; the composer will not be drawn into the full fury of a powerful emotion. His hands, with which he had begun to gesture, drop to his side; he relaxes once more into peaceful resignation. 'Why should we torture ourselves?' he seems to say. 'There is an eternity beneath the flux; let that suffice.'

J. H. ELLIOT.

## MUSIC IN BROWNING

SOME fifty years ago, in an essay that won many hitherto daunted readers for a poet in the evening of his days, Augustine Birrell said that of English writers Browning alone had 'sought to fathom in verse the deep mysteries of sound.' The notion was an article in the creed of late Victorian Browningism. And to-day we can hardly cavil at it. Shakespeare, when he chose, might touch on music and employ its terms with a golden ease beyond anything the poet of *Abt Vogler* could command; yet, as a sustained lyrical meditation on the art, its nature and its powers, surely that poem remains unrivalled. Perhaps only Robert Bridges has come near it, in a few passages of *The Testament of Beauty*. A second tenet of the older Browningism is in these days less confidently upheld. Mr. Osbert Burdett states it thus: 'Good poems upon music are rare, and even in famous ones musicians will complain that they find but rhapsodies without knowledge; except in Browning's, where the very score can be read, the keyboard and the pedals be felt.' With this we may link Mr. Chesterton's crisper saying that the poet 'could not merely talk art with artists—he could talk shop with them.' At this point the musician begins to lose patience. He declares that Browning's use of technical language is sometimes wrong, frequently clumsy and misleading. The literary critic maintains that the musical 'shop' often spoils the poetry. Where is Browning, they both ask, in such respects beside Milton? The elder poet conjured up sound-images with a controlled splendour as far beyond Browning as was his precise, luminous mastery of technical detail. His knowledge of music, though of necessity narrower, was surer and deeper. Only once, in that sonnet with its false estimate of Henry Lawes, did Milton ever go seriously wrong in his poetic dealings with the art.

A revaluation, however modest, of Browning the poet of music and a replacing of him in the hierarchy of such poets must naturally sweep away a certain amount of superstitious homage. Our main endeavour is to find out, if only summarily, what he knew and felt about music and how he expressed in verse his knowledge and his feeling. We shall work from the outside to the inside of our subject, noting first the degree of the poet's practical acquaintance with the art, passing then to the general treatment of sound-impressions in his work.

Then will come up for notice poems in which music is a background or at most an ingredient of a composite emotional whole, then discussions in verse of specific pieces and composers, lastly such divinings of the art's ultimate secrets as are essayed in *Abt Vogler*.

Music's flame was first fanned in Browning by his partly-German mother, whose piano-playing fascinated him. His teacher was John Relfe, whom he calls great, and whom the *Browning Encyclopædia* calls a celebrated contrapuntist, although this musician has found his way neither into 'Grove' nor into the *Dictionary of National Biography*. With the poet's own authority we may think of his young self playing on the piano, before he could stretch an octave, Charles Avison's simple and sturdy 'March in C,' which as an old man he was to quote, and discuss at length, in *Parleyings with certain people of importance in their day*. Many a reasonably well informed musician may be forgiven for asking whether Charles Avison is, or ever was, of importance. But here we come upon Browning's characteristic fondness for the byways of fame. He missed an academic education; always he preserved the instincts of the enquiring boy turned loose into the library of a well-read, indulgent father. All his days, if he wanted to write of art or of religion, he would call up a Pacchiarotto or a Ben Ezra rather than some name the world had heard of. So music's protagonists must be Vogler, Avison, Galuppi, even an imaginary Master Hugues; if Bach or Handel, Beethoven or Schumann are mentioned, it is incidentally, in the swing of an argument or as details in some kind of background. During that gaily studious boyhood both painting and music clearly put up a good fight against the spell of Byron, Shelley and Keats and the urge of opening poetic genius. Between the ages of fourteen and sixteen Browning thought definitely of being a composer, and wrote songs which he afterwards destroyed.

He would seem to have become a passable pianist and organist. His poetry can convey, not through technical language merely, something of the feel of the instruments. His wife once wrote, during their sojourn in Italy: 'We fill up our days with books and music, and a little writing has its share.' He taught their son 'Pen' his musical rudiments, even guiding him through Beethoven's seventh Piano Sonata. In an Italian church, if it was empty, he liked to play the organ. After Elizabeth's death less is heard of private music-making, more of attendance at London concerts and recitals. Yet we have to hunt far in the correspondence of these later years for an opinion on music or on its performance. The most definite one to be gleaned is this on Rubinstein playing at Erard's in 1867: 'He

is a marvellous player, beyond what I remember of Liszt and immeasurably superior to everybody else. . . . He played divinely.' The pronouncement will hardly affect the positions of these pianists in any ultimate order of merit; it shows, too, that in judging performances Browning could hand out, like other people, the smooth-worn change of commonplace rapture. And once he did worse than that. A young Academy student was to paint a picture illustrating two lines from Elizabeth Browning's sonnet, *Perplexed Music*:

Experience, like a pale musician, holds  
A dulcimer of patience in his hand.

Mr. Albert H. Orme wrote to Browning to enlist his help for the student. The poet replied: 'I take it, Patience [he means Experience] holds a dulcimer in his hand, the left one,—propping the instrument (as a lyre might be managed) against his side. There are many strings to it, and one hand suffices to evoke harmonies enough by help of the fingers and thumb.' Orme evidently wrote back demurring to this strange method of treating a dulcimer. In a humble little reply, Browning managed to share the blame with a brother poet: 'I have no doubt the dulcimer was such an instrument as your authorities describe. My own most vivid notion of it must be caught from Coleridge and his "Abyssinian maid." So—*peccavimus!*' A man may of course commit such a blunder, as Shakespeare did in writing of the jacks that leapt to kiss the Dark Lady's hands while she played the virginals, and still be able to write well about music. Yet clearly, Browning was in the double sense a musical amateur. He could speak from imperfect knowledge, give a commonplace opinion, betray both as performer and as judge the marks of the dabbler. But his passion for music lay deep enough to influence his life-habits and definitely to tinge his poetry. Also, this passion was supported by quite a useful reserve of information, practical and theoretical, without which his loftiest thoughts on the art could never have found apt expression.

Strange though the fact may at first appear, his poetry does not deal lavishly in aural impressions. He calls up sounds less habitually than do Shakespeare and Milton, Tennyson and Keats. In his rendering into verse of the world's pageant, his devouring eye counts for most. Let heart and mind be stirred in his great game of voicing the thoughts and feelings of a host of people, of uttering each one's apologia, however strange it be; then, as his images, his figures and metaphors come crowding, we see much more than we hear. His wide range of verbal harmony and discord lies outside our subject; so



do his rhythms, so various, so vital an instrument of his changing lyric-moods. But his treatment of the sounds of nature may for a little while be dwelt on, if only that we may trace in it a peculiarity that persists when he deals with music. It is not his way to call up sound for the sake of its own beauty. Not for him the unreflecting joy of the sounds in Keats's *Fancy* ode, the clear melancholy of those in the last stanza of *Autumn*. Nature's voices must sing a modest part, strictly subordinate to a poem's leading strain, emotional or intellectual. Let thought, as it sometimes does, overpower feeling, and sensuous impressions tend to vanish. Only in *Paracelsus*, completed at twenty-three, are sounds a little unruly. Here from many instances it is obvious that of nature's elemental voices the wind haunted Browning most. Like an asp it 'slips whispering from bough to bough'; it passes 'like a dancing psaltress' over earth's breast in spring. Its spell is reborn in the later set of lyrics, *James Lee's Wife*, and in the lovely bout of *terza rima* that renders the song of Thamyris in *Aristophanes' Apology*. In Tresham's lament from *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* an apt musical figure is born of the sound of wind in tree-tops:

Dear and ancient trees . . .  
Oh, never more for me shall winds intone  
With all your tops a vast antiphony,  
Demanding and responding in God's praise!

This play, however, is early; one instance must suffice of the stern rule under which nature's voices live in Browning's mature period. If for a poem's main purpose they may be heard at all, they are heard in a vivid aural shorthand. What a chance, for many poets, would the thunderstorm have been that prostrates the profane savage at the end of *Caliban upon Setebos*! Browning dispatches it, superbly, in eight lines, and with no sound-impressions beyond the snap of a tree and 'there, there, there, there, there!' for the thunder. His main concern is the storm's effect on Caliban's mind. If he can make the storm adequate for this effect, then the shorter it is the better.

Song, when the sound of it is invoked in his work, plays a part just as integral and gets as a rule short measure. Bird-song comes at need, heard in a liquid jet of a few lines. We know his wise thrush, who 'sings each song twice over,' but never are we remotely within hail of the shining sound-flood of Meredith's *Lark Ascending*. Human song, too, must have a strict relevance. The snatches in *Pippa* do not merely bring lyric relief; they, with their singer, are the main-spring of the play's action. Minstrelsy, in *Sordello*, might have been

expected to clear the poem's stifling air a little; after all, *Sordello* was a troubadour. But no: read though we may of lutes and contests, of 'rondel, tenzon, virlai and sirvent,' we catch no sound, no lilt of them; Browning was intent on his hero's mind, its hungers and its ambitions. Vividly real, by contrast, is the climbing rhythmic chorus in such a mature lyric as *A Grammarian's Funeral*. Suggested by a bare word or two, the chant pulses out in the poem's rhythm from start to finish, for here Browning cares about it; he joins in with these men as they sing of their master, marching to the peak where they leave him under the stars. We catch as clearly those shorter, gruffer lays, the *Cavalier Tunes*. But as the great poem *Saul* progresses, its crowding thoughts overpower the harp-throbs and the voice of David; the imagined music in it, the impression on the inner ear of singing and playing, cannot stay its far-soaring course.

Sketching in this way the poet's manner of conjuring up sound, already we have lit upon works in which sound has become music. In a few more lyrics the art, while not yet in the foreground, is an important element in the total impression. With Browning's lyrics, chronological order matters little; they are his high tableland where, young or old, he walks and sings at ease. On one side of it lies the youthful jungle of *Paracelsus*, *Sordello* and the plays; on the other the arid steppes of later intellectualism and tortured mannerism; to these luckily the seeker for the music in him need seldom descend. A charming lyric serves as epilogue to *The two Poets of Croisic*. Set in an age as remote perhaps as *Saul's*, it tells how a Greek bard sang to his lyre in a contest, how a string snapped and how a cricket, 'its little heart on fire,' darted to the rescue, supplying the sound of the broken string 'with its chirrup low and sweet.' Some of the poem's detail may give the solemn musician pause, but to cavil at anything in so pretty a toy of fancy is absurd. *Waring*, the gay series of enquiries after Browning's friend Domett, who went to New Zealand, has more matter in it. Here is one of the poet's surmises about the talented Domett—one conceived in 1842, in our early-Victorian musical doldrums, with Sterndale Bennett our brightest star:

Music means this land of ours  
Some favour yet, to pity won  
By Purcell from his *Rosy Bowers*,—  
'Give me my so-long promised son,  
Let Waring end what I begun!'

This of course was playful; but the soundest of instincts took Browning's mind back to Purcell, over a whole eighteenth century of

Avisons and of other people of importance in their day. More than that: he went on to picture his friend wandering in woods on some mild evening 'at prime of March,' listening to sounds that might turn to music within him:

While small birds said to themselves  
What should soon be actual song,  
And young gnats, by tens and twelves,  
Made as if they were the throng  
That crowd around and carry aloft  
The sound they have nursed, so sweet and pure,  
Out of a myriad noises soft,  
Into a tone that can endure  
Amid the noise of a July noon.

No aural impression in Browning is more delicate than this rising symphony of little sounds, this murmurous allegory or prophecy of the rebirth of our music, which, as we know, came in time. Here he lets us savour the sounds, he forgets to use shorthand. Another masterly lyric, *A Serenade at the Villa*, brings into actual union the music of nature and of man. But here is no playfulness—only a bitter, hopeless love-plaint, breathed out and struck out on a sultry Italian night, with the night's own voices awake around it:

When the crickets stopped their cry,  
When the owls forbore a term,  
You heard music; that was I . . .  
Singing helped the verses best,  
And when singing's best was done,  
To my lute I left the rest.

The last two lines point, one might fancy, to the fact that instruments meant more to Browning than did voices. They meant vastly more. He lived through a long operatic heyday which has left the barest trace on his work. In *Youth and Art*, of course, there is the gay picture of the girl who 'shook upon E in alt' and 'ran the chromatic scale up,' and who was going to embitter Grisi's existence for her. In *The Ring and the Book*, so tightly crammed with social detail, there is one specific allusion to opera—Guido's petulant outburst about the male soprano who squalled 'Ah Rinaldo mine!' Here and there in the huge work we catch the thrum of a lute-string, the toy of gallantry. Thrummings and pluckings, hammer-strokes on strings held for Browning more musical urgency than did bowings. To violins he makes but one substantive reference, and a curious one, in the rambling prelude to *Red-Cotton Nightcap Country*. He tells

of a 'fiddle-show' in Kensington; he sketches, with knowledge and charm, a selection

Of all the sorts were ever set to cheek,  
'Stablished on clavicle, sawn bow-hand wise,  
Or touched lute-fashion and forefinger-plucked.

He declares that he would like to see some specimen on which Corelli had played a 'most dulcet Giga, dreamiest Saraband'—these adjectives take no account of the clean strength of the Italian—or, again, one from which Paganini had 'combed the fierce electric sparks.' His realistic curiosity for instruments, their workings, their powers and their history is a trait that does not always make for poetry, or for intelligibility; nevertheless, like so much of his other detail, it gives his work a singular air of having been quarried out of actual life. This curiosity, in the poems that deal most directly with music, fixed itself as a rule on the piano, its precursors, and the organ.

Of such poems, *A Toccata of Galuppi's* may first be mentioned. Its main burden, its lament for the 'mirth and folly' of a vanished eighteenth-century Venice, gets home poignantly as we reach its end. Two features in the poem, however, are overdone, and go some way to wreck it: first, the colloquial familiarity; second, the musical 'shop.' Galuppi's flimsy music would chime in well enough with the burden of evanescent futility. But then we are told that Browning had no particular work in mind. This disturbs the illusion of reality; some of the technical detail does the same. 'Lesser' thirds (meaning minor ones) may well be plaintive, sevenths 'com-miserating'; the dominant may well be persistent, though its 'answer' in such music is surely the tonic; not, as Browning would have it, the octave. But 'sixths diminished,' in Galuppi? And would he have played his toccatas 'stately at the clavichord,' whose faint little twang, across a room of any size, would have been barely audible even if all the social butterflies around him had 'left off talking' to 'hear a master play'? Some of the stones brought by the poet to build his imaginative edifice crumble as he sets them in place; he has not examined them carefully enough.

We take a leap now to Browning's old age, to the *Parleying* with Charles Avison whose march in C his infant fingers had once pounded on the piano. Rugged and garrulous like so much of his later work that is not lyric, this *Parleying* resolves itself into a clarion declaration that good art lasts; in particular, that music which appears demoded, but harbours a few grains of goodness, will sound good, if you put your heart into it. In the poem's course the main facts about Avison are told—that he was a Newcastle organist who in

eighteenth-century England, in his *Essay on musical expression*, dared to uphold Marcello and Geminiani against Handel. He had his circle of supporters in the north. In writing of him the poet was not only resuming a boyish enthusiasm and his favourite task of interesting himself in a rebel. He was able to discuss at large the question of musical fashion, which clearly haunted him. Once in a letter he took pains to write down three typical cadences—short closing sentences of Corelli and Handel and a bustling finish of Rossini—the implication being that each one in turn had its day and ceased to be. 'In music we know how fashions end,' the hero of the great love-lyric *The Last Ride Together*, found time to say. Even in the *Parleying*, as Browning thrashes out the subject, quoting a little array of composers among whom Wagner was of course the most dangerous innovator, he seems to think at times that the relatively good can die. Life passes from one, to possess another; *Radaminta* and *Rinaldo* are ghosts now: 'Look your last on Handel? Gaze your first on Gluck!' All the same, his conclusion rings out clearly:

Never dream

That what once lived shall ever die! They seem  
Dead—do they? lapsed things lost in limbo? Bring  
Our life to kindle theirs, and straight each king  
Starts, you shall see, stands up, from head to foot  
No inch that is not Purcell!

His early talisman, the little march, is of course not as good as Purcell, although a careless hearer might think it so. It is stiffer, without Purcell's grace; but some of the poet's epithets for it are adequate; 'bold-stepping, forthright, persistent.' For a while he plays with the idea that it may need 'reactives,' superadded modernisms to make it live. The sophisticated Don Juan of *Fifine at the Fair* amuses himself with the cognate but stranger notion that Schumann's *Carnaval* is just a series of old ideas served up with a fresh pickle. He drops knowing remarks, too, about the monotony of its flat keys and the awkward jumps of its 'Paganini' section. But the Browning of the *Parleying* makes up his mind. Avison's march is good, whether on the piano or on a brass band; in its own period or in any period. And as though recollecting that long ago he had written *Cavalier Tunes* but nothing similar on the other side, he quotes the march and sets words to it in praise of 'Pym and such carles'—words which, if you repeat a note here and there, fit it excellently:

Fife, trump, drum, sound! and singers then,  
Marching, say 'Pym, the man of men!'  
Up, heads, your proudest—out, throats, your loudest—  
'Somerset's Pym!'

Browning is irresistible, even at seventy-five, when he writes a men's chorus; by the time he has finished with this march he has invested it with the pomp of the Mastersingers.

*Flute-music, with an accompaniment*, from his last work, *Asolando*, shows how perversely playful he could be, if he wished, to the end; it develops the idea that underlies our last extravagant remark, namely, that the listener to music hears what he thinks he hears. A flute-player wrestling with a 'complete instructor' is overheard by two neighbours. One, a lady, is a realist; she has heard him before. The other, a gentleman who talks to her, thinks the sounds wonderful; he expatiates on their wonder; 'distance, ash-tops aiding,' and the sort of mind he possesses have so wrought on the music. Nor is he much perturbed when the lady rates the flautist in comic late-Browningsque fashion:

That's an air of Tulou's  
He maltreats persistent,  
Till as lief I'd hear some Zulu's  
Bone-piped bag, breath-distent,  
Madden native dances.

'What if all's appearance?' is the gist of the gentleman's reply. Let him hear but one phrase 'trilled deftly,' then at need he will conjecture the whole piece. Thought, not sense, is the true reality. Perhaps he is a Berkleian, or a follower of Parmenides, re-incarnate.

The Victorian habit of amateur flute-playing prompted this amusing poem. Another wind-instrument brought into being the two last that remain to be mentioned. One is, rightly taken, a grotesque; the other ranks with Browning's sublimest lyrics. In *Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha* an organist wrangles with the shade of a composer who never lived and who made 'mountainous fugues.' The organist has just played one; now he gives Master Hugues a piece of his mind. His views are too vividly expressed for us to doubt that he is in some degree the poet's mouthpiece. He objects to the fugue not merely because it is crabbed but because it is a fugue at all. Now to say that a subject is answered 'where no answer need be' and that a third voice 'volunteers needlessly help' is stupid criticism; a fugue's voices must enter, as a sonnet must have fourteen lines. If, in this musical form, academic 'comments and glozes' may hide the 'far land' of beauty and truth, they may do the like in many others; as readily as other forms, the fugue form may reveal the far land. Writing this work in mid-career, the poet seems to have shared current, long-prevailing superstitions about fugues and Bach. Clearly, though, he learned better; romping through the peroration of the



*Parleying* with Avison years afterwards, he calls out to Bach for a subject and dubs him 'glorious.' As we have hinted, *Master Hugues* is best taken as a grotesque. The contest of the fugue's five voices is hearty comedy, with its crazy rhyming and inspired figures like those 'axes and crowbars' that always send our mind to certain sections of the 'Hammerclavier' fugue. Here, again, is Browning's closest transcription of the externals of a practical musician's life, divined, partly by sympathy, a little by experience, perhaps, in Italian churches. More provokingly than are most music-makers, the organist is shut out by material conditions from the 'far land' to which he may lead others. Browning knew his lot, much easier to-day, and the accidents attendant on it. Cold churches, the heavy old 'tracker' action, weary boys at bellows letting the wind out, guttering candles in lofts, treacherous stairs: what wonder that, his colloquy over, the poor man in *Master Hugues* lost his temper?

Hallo, you sacristan, show us a light there!  
 Down it dips, gone like a rocket.  
 What, you want, do you, to come unawares,  
 Sweeping the church up for first morning-prayers,  
 And find a poor devil at end of his cares  
 At the foot of your rotten-runged rat-riddled stairs?  
 Do I carry the moon in my pocket?

It may be near to doggerel, but it is a vivid slice from the kind of existence many a true musician has had to endure.

Far though it soars, *Abt Vogler* too has the stubborn world of fact at the root of it. Vogler, the eighteenth-century organist was a charlatan and a cleric. He travelled prodigiously, playing good music and 'storms'; he improved organ-construction, was famed as an extemporizer, and invented the 'orchestration,' of whose merits there are varying accounts. His music is dead. Still, the great simile at the poem's opening, with its analogies from architecture, suits best the improvisations of an organist. And only a Browning able himself to claim, in some degree, the organ's multitudinous 'slaves of the sound' could have written the poem as he has written it. Here indeed is the feel of the instrument at which, as at no other to the same extent, a player can send one 'slave' soaring and another burrowing, 'broad on the roots of things.' Here, more clearly than elsewhere, we imagine that Browning could listen to music polyphonically. The poem seems borne on music's own twin wings, movement and culminating form. The verse's 'heavily undulating harmonies'—to use Dr. Oliver Elton's terms—help to sustain the conception; the organ's weight, its boom and its blaze are in them.

And when heaven has seemed to yearn down to meet this pinnacled glory, and presences have walked, plain in the place, and all is over, the musician is stricken with the thought that it is gone, 'never to be again.' Extemporisation has in these days lost much of its honour and much of its use. Why, asks the captious reader, did not Vogler, instead of lamenting, get pen and paper, dash down all he could of his creation and then work it up? But we must meet the man on his own ground; much good music has vanished on the air. Samuel Sebastian Wesley is credibly reported to have improvised finer work than he ever wrote; Franck may well have done so, as may still greater men. Or the mystical consolation granted to Vogler, that 'there shall never be one lost good' many of us prefer not to dogmatize. Two other ideas, however, thrown out in the wonderful poem, demand a moment's notice. Here is one:

I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,  
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound,  
but a star.

This is surely the most magical expression in words of the shining, the far-flashing significance of harmony. Let the musician maintain, if he will, that the 'horizontal' view of music is more profitable than the 'vertical.' He will quite possibly admit that the *Siegfried Idyll* is the loveliest piece of polyphony since Bach. Yet there are chords in the *Idyll* which, considered singly, just as chords, seem to shine with all the love ever felt by parents for their children. The other idea is of course this:

God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;  
The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians  
know.

One may have shed many dogmas and yet believe that this tremendous claim can be to some extent justified. We musicians may not know as a scientist knows. There is some music, familiar and exhaustless, which nevertheless does seem to tell us of something its creators knew, of something we feel we know when we hear it—of a peace 'beyond these voices,' of a certainty beyond argument, beyond any words. I feel it in Gluck's Elysian Fields, in the Andante of the 'Unfinished,' in the slow movements of Beethoven's fifth and ninth Symphonies, in the prelude and epilogue to 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Others will feel it elsewhere. And because we feel it, we love music as much as we do.

Browning, too clever at spoiling his creations, left a blot on the last stanza of *Abt Vogler*. The poem had to sink from its climax; the

conception of a resting-place, 'the C major of life,' may pass. But that sliding from the common chord to the minor and 'blunting it into a ninth'—has any musician made sense of it? Browning was the first English poet after Dryden to use music's technical language freely and with fair knowledge. But the unregarded gaps in it often tripped him up; his hastiness of expression often threw a mist over such knowledge as he had. What did he mean, near the end of *Master Hugues*, by 'the mode Palestrina'? What, in the *Parleying* with Avison, might 'Elizabethan plainsong' imply? One could go on with such queries, a whole catechism of them. Yet as a poet of music Browning holds a firm place. In an age when most poets fought shy of the subject, he brought to it not only knowledge but a riotous wit and fancy, breadth of sympathy and a determination that the art should take its due rank as a high theme for verse. Only one younger English contemporary rivalled him. Robert Bridges had a preciser knowledge; his touch on music was more delicate, more consistently poetic. But he never threw off his singing robes; now and then you saw too plainly the academic cut of them. Browning wears no robes; he is unkempt; but his feet also stand on solid musical fact. The wind that rose in *Paracelsus* keeps the air fresh about him; nature's voices chime in, never too insistently. More clearly we hear men singing in chorus; lovers' lutes, the old music of Avison and Galuppi thrum on the breeze. And above all this concourse the organ builds its fading palace of sound, as Browning stands looking hopefully upward for Abt Vogler's consolation.

W. WRIGHT ROBERTS.

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## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

*Essai sur les gammes Japonaises.* Par Noël Peri. Paris: Geuthner.  
25 fr.

The Abbé Noël Peri spent his spare time while on missionary work in Japan studying the music of the country. The present slim volume, unfortunately unfinished at the time of the author's death in a motor accident in 1922, is the result of that hobby. The matter is discussed in an illuminating manner and the material is marshalled methodically and explained clearly—as clearly, that is, as is possible in the present state of knowledge. For complete certainty is evidently difficult to reach. There are points, notably that of the reason guiding the arbitrary formation of the modes, which defy analysis. Japan, as is known, took the main part of her culture from China with the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century. It would seem as though a number of samples of Chinese music were included in the bundle sent from China to Japan; that these got mixed together in transit; and that when unpacking took place on the Japanese side the bits and pieces had to be fitted together as best might be in the absence of definite information as to the theory and practice of the art. Since then the theorists have had a gay time inventing rules to explain puzzles. Japan, like China, acknowledges the twin principles of *yin* and *yang*, taking these over into its music and identifying the two main modes therewith. Thus the mode *ryo* (sombre, delicate, feminine) is *yin*, while the mode *ritsu* (noble, strong, male) is *yang*. It is significant in the light of present tendencies in the East that an overwhelming percentage of Japanese melodies favour the mode *ritsu*. The mode *ryo* is only used by musicians of the Imperial Palace and even then the official repertoire only contains four tunes in that mode. Taking into account the remarkably successful development along materialistic lines of these highly trained worshippers of efficiency it would be interesting as well as valuable to discover which was cause and which effect. A Japanese writer of the eighteenth century has put it on record that China is the country of *ryo*, Japan of *ritsu*. Whether this be true or not, a few songs in the *ryo* mode might restore the balance and thus help us all towards sanity and tolerance.

SCOTT GODDARD.

*Dance arranging.* By Paul Weirick. New York: Witmark. \$5.

Apart from the composer of dance music there is (often a different person) the arranger. His duty it is to make the stuff 'hot' and to keep it boiling. And in this book you can see how he does it. How useful such a handbook might be for the actual work of arrangement it is difficult to judge. It seems incredible that the study of this sort of cookery-book recipe-writing would result in the clever arrangements (weird, titillating, pleasant, distasteful, boring, but always able

and efficient) that crowd broadcast dance programmes to-day. That sort of thing is surely a matter of touch, of acute hearing just as much as in the scoring of any music. But still, Forsyth gives a lot of useful information as to ranges, proclivities, dangers, and this book also has hints on how to space chords for the guitar, and so forth, that probably serve the same purpose. The second section deals with problems of construction, how to lay-out the dance, how many bars of introduction here, how many of modulation there. These things are called routines. Indeed they are that. The modulations which appear to suit this type of amusement are of a quite indescribable banality.

SCOTT GODDARD.

*Chronicle of my Life.* By Igor Stravinsky. Translated from the French. London: Gollancz.

This autobiography, which has peculiar value as coming from a creative artist, is made up of three types of communication: the recounting of the writer's journeys, concert tours, &c. (there is the minimum of dates and one is at times confused by this); the recounting of the various stages in his artistic development with the different works as milestones; finally the discussion of these works, of the works of other musicians both new and old, of one or two æsthetic principles. It is in the last section that there is to be found that which alone gives the book its reason for existence. The rest might have been written by anyone and indeed will one day have to be re-written by somebody with a stricter attention to biographical method. Yet no one but Stravinsky himself could have written as he has done on his own music and his own ideas of what music can and cannot do, should and should not attempt. With a wonderful command of French for a foreigner (as the original edition abundantly shows) he dissects these matters and probes into them. One is left with the impression (probably helped by memories of his physical presence) of an extremely vital, pertinacious man, out of touch with life but nearly in touch with a rather arid art of existence, absorbed in his music, living (as he insists) in the present yet aware not only of the strength of the past as a dead weight on the forward-looking creator but of its importance as the depository of doctrine. As he grows older there are signs of a wish to return to the fold. This one-time revolutionary writes a symphony, a sonata and a concerto. His ideas of the value of abstract music ('music in itself has no power to express anything') find support in the names, though not in the forms, that have stood the test of time. The forms he will reconstitute nearer to his wish. This noticeable dichotomy is rendered the more acute because of an intense preoccupation with self. This self-consciousness is felt throughout the book, though it only finds deliberate expression in the notice taken of the facts of illness and death. But behind the book there is the strange phenomenon of a highly successful artist who, having had his full share of publicity, now undertakes, as he says in the prefatory note, the task of presenting a true picture of himself in order 'to dissipate the accumulation of misunderstandings that have gathered about both my work and my person.' The preoccupation with one's 'person' must be noted. At the end he asks, possibly a shade uneasily, 'Have I dispelled all the misconceptions

which have accumulated about my work and my personality? I hope so.' It is the eternal question: Am I the servant of my public or its master? Not the least interesting aspect of this latest musical autobiography is the fact that its writer has taken such trouble to explain and defend.

SCOTT GODDARD.

*Radio and the composer.* With a Foreword by Sir Edward German. Ivor Nicholson and Watson. 1s. net.

*The gramophone in education.* By William W. Johnson. Sir Isaac Pitman. 5s. net.

The first of these books is a disappointment. From its title one might have supposed that it dealt with the remuneration composers get in this day from broadcast performances of their works and how that can be increased so that a man who has written a symphony may expect to receive a little bread and butter in return for a performance. Instead, this anonymous pamphlet (was there nobody to put a name to it?) fights, on the whole ineffectively, for the writer of sheet music, of ballads and suchlike ephemeral business propositions. People who have used their gifts in this form of money-getting have in the past had immense success (Ivor Novello when a boy wrote 'Keep the home fires burning' and is said to have made round about £16,000 out of it) and that this rich seam is now being pilfered by wireless programme-makers leaves our withers unwrung. That the kind of song which in 1927 sold 1,750,000 copies should in 1932 sell a bare 400,000 seems if anything a matter for congratulation. We but long the more for the day when these things are no longer even broadcast. That will solve the problem of royalties and leave the air so much the freer for more interesting stuff. 'From time immemorial music in some form or another must always have existed, and there can be no doubt that throughout the ages it will ever continue to exist.' Well there! The first statement is probably untrue, the second is a prophecy hardly worth the making. 'Music, like the poor, has always been with us, and never more so than to-day, when the miracle of broadcasting places the works of the world's greatest composers, living and dead, at the disposal of all.' Had this brochure dealt with the work of any great living composer it might have been worth reading.

The handbook on education by means of the gramophone is another piece of special pleading, but it at least shows that some thought has gone to the writing of it. Skeleton lessons are given, useful suggestions for material are made, and the section dealing with the commercial student brings the matter into the province of competitive existence. A large amount of information as to instruments, records, miniature scores and so forth is contained in the appendices.

SCOTT GODDARD.

*Gluck.* By Martin Cooper. Chatto & Windus. 12s. 6d. net.

Authors of biographies often show a very natural bias for their subject, and if they cannot prove his private life to have been immaculate, they at least claim for some of his works a perfection which had escaped the attention of others. Mr. Cooper's 'Gluck' is, in

this respect, an exception. He never exalts Gluck at the expense of his contemporaries and his judgment is not only sound but entirely devoid of bias.

The amount of information gathered is considerable. No man who influenced Gluck's outlook at all has escaped attention; no fact concerning his life and work has been accepted without close scrutiny, and these scholarly labours entitle the volume to special consideration. Not his least merit, however, is to have seen in the just historical perspective the society in which Gluck moved and the life and conditions at the Austrian court in the days of Marie Theresa, whose poet laureate was Metastasio, and whose Italian connections facilitated an interchange of artistic ideals which have left a deep mark in musical history.

In the preface he contributes to Mr. Cooper's study, Professor Dent expresses the belief that readers of these pages must wish to see 'Paris and Helen' and 'Armida' at Covent Garden. There seems to be little likelihood of the wish being fulfilled, considering how conservative the taste of the opera-loving public is. But our debt to Mr. Cooper will not be less on that account.

F. B.

*Busoni. Briefe an Seine Frau. Rotapfel Verlag. Leipzig.*

In reading the letters written by Ferruccio Busoni to his wife during many years of wandering, there are moments when one is inclined to put down the volume with an apology. We feel as if we had strayed into private grounds and broken into an intimacy that should have been respected. The collector of the letters, Herr Friederich Schnapp, can easily justify the publication, however, on the grounds that it undoubtedly reveals something of Busoni's nature that is illuminating and lovable.

He was not a trained observer and his mind had never submitted to a single disciplined system, but absorbed much from very different sources. Arnold of Rugby set before us the ideal of the man, who, being an expert on one subject, could apply the expert's mind to other subjects. The only subject in which Busoni's father fostered expert knowledge was that of pianoforte playing—a subject which does not lead to experienced judgment of men. On the other hand, the boy's early training encouraged a wide outlook; he was not an 'internationalist' so much as above all narrow conceptions of nationalism; he was one of the few whose nature responded to the call of both Latin and Germanic culture, an Italian whom Italy could not hold, imbued with the art of Germany, who cherished a deep affection for an 'island of heart's desire,' Switzerland.

In England, too, he was spiritually at ease, especially in Manchester, in that pre-war Manchester whose liberal soul honoured art and knowledge of all kind. There he had friends and champions in Dayas, Carl Fuchs and, above all, in Adolph Brodsky, ever a keen supporter of new composers whose work appealed to him.

At times there are sentences which were probably meant to provide a theme for discussion when the writer and the recipient met again, and these whet the reader's interest without satisfying it. And there

is much besides that stands in need of elucidation. We are told that Sarasate's comment on César Franck was: 'He was a poor accompanist and they made a god of him.' Does this mean that Franck's compositions were merely those of a poor accompanist, or that while poor as an accompanist, he wrote music which may have been good enough, yet not quite deserving all that was said of it?

On the whole these letters will have their place in history. They give an excellent account of a wandering artist's life in our time and they contain records of important conversations and relations with musicians whose names were household words.

F. B.

*Anglo-French Sequelæ.* Edited from the papers of the late Dr. Henry Marriott Bannister by Anselm Hughes, O.S.B. Plainsong and Mediæval Music Society. 10s.

The more vulgar punsters were nearer truth than they might have been when they hailed this volume as a book of 'squeelies,' for the subject matter is, in fact, certain long-drawn wordless emissions of sound uttered by human beings under the stress of strong emotion. These were however musical, ordered, and religious. The point of contact with modern conditions is the sequence which, in the English Church, is becoming increasingly common as a piece of liturgical music sung between the Epistle and Gospel in the Eucharist, and of which nine examples are given with their mediæval melodies in the *English Hymnal*. From early days some form of psalmody separated the two scripture readings, and in the course of the immense reorganisation of the liturgical chant under Pope Gregory at the close of the sixth century, there had become appended to the psalm as an almost regular feature a decorative and flowing chant to the word 'Alleluya.' This word was too joyful an addition to leave unadorned, and the final syllable became charged with a long vocalise or *jubilus*—a kind of controlled hilarity.

But the inch of the Gregorian Alleluya soon provoked a desire for the ell, and in the centuries immediately following, a creative impulse seems to have been let loose, new vocalises on a much grander scale were constructed, demanding (like much other plainsong) a very high degree of technical proficiency on the part of picked singers, and exhibiting a conscious complexity of style, subdivision, and repetition. In fact a new school of composition had come to birth, and it is these *Sequelæ* that are the subject matter of the present volume.

But in their very complexity lay the seed of decline. The guarding of the Gregorian tradition rested then on memory, and in the absence of notation the device was seized on of aiding memory by allotting words to the vocalises, almost syllable per note, and from the weaving sinuosity of the rhythmic Sequela was born the sequence—a new form, capable of a very high order of beauty, but sometimes also of stereotyped dullness, whose popularity in the later middle ages was immense; many of them are directly traceable, note for note to their parent Sequelæ and Alleluyas, many remain untraced, and many (like our English Golden Sequence by Stephen Langton, E.H. 155) were free compositions.

It was Dr. Bannister's aim to make a vast critical edition of these,



but before its completion he died, and the present author—for he is more than editor—is to be thanked for drawing together the conclusions already formed by this distinguished scholar, and presenting them with an annotated collection of the 54 Sequela melodies to which Sequences are traceable. He has concentrated on the Anglo-French melodies because they form the most important group, and because he has strong reason to believe that the Sequela had its origin in Northern France. With Dr. Bannister he agrees that, for all the contrast in style and form between Alleluya and Sequela melody, there is little call to turn to Byzantium to seek an origin.

Dom Anselm Hughes claims to do little more than present a sign-post to point the connection of his corner of investigation with the great high road of musical history. But his notes and conclusions have a great value, and if only by the example of his full critical analysis of the typical Sequela *Adducentur*, he will encourage others in research along the lines that both he and Dr. Bannister would desire.

In the event of a reprint, it may be pointed out that in Table III of the *Adducentur* study there are nine places where the peculiarities of the Chichester Troper appear to be inaccurately noted.

J. H. ARNOLD.

*Musique Ancienne.* Arthur Rau, Paris.

This catalogue of ancient music includes specimens of Mozart and Rossini; its title, therefore, must not be taken literally. The catalogue provides a reliable guide to the prices asked for rare or unusual copies—a price which bears no relation to the artistic value of the work. 50 francs are asked for Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' and 'L'Impresario', but the price of a ballet heroique by Jean-Joseph Mouret, a composer unknown to fame, is 3,800 francs. Rameau's scores average 800 francs; a first edition of Rossini about the same. Most valuable appears to be a collection of motets for two choirs by Lulli, the price of which is 20,000 francs.

F. B.

*Brahms. His life and work.* Karl Geiringer. George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 12s. 6d.

This translation of Geiringer's *Life of Brahms* will be welcomed by all who have been attracted by the composer's personality—a personality which, as with most men of distinction, presents some singular features. Herr Geiringer does not solve all our doubts. Indeed, in some respects he adds to them. But, having had access to a number of letters and documents inaccessible to previous biographers, he has been able to stress certain aspects and to harmonise others which before seemed somewhat out of the picture.

His version of the Agathe von Siebold incident differs from that given by Specht. That idyll lasted as long as the spring and came to an end, according to Specht, either because Johannes' tender conscience reproached him for his desertion of Clara Schumann, or because he saw no prospects of settling down and could not offer Agathe such a position as, he felt, was due to her. Herr Geiringer, placing his faith in Agathe von Siebold's 'Errinerungen,' says that Brahms wrote

a letter in which he said 'I love you. I must see you again. But I cannot wear fetters. Write to me, whether I am to come back, to take you in my arms, to kiss you and tell you that I love you.' Agathe, deeply hurt at this singular proposal, broke the connection there and then. It must be remembered, however, that Agathe's 'Erinnerungen' were written in form of a novel and that the letter in question is not introduced as authentic.

In other ways Herr Geiringer shows the bias we expect and respect in a sympathetic biographer. He does not hold that the attack on 'The music of the future' was responsible for the far from friendly relations between Wagner and Brahms and asserts that after their meeting in 1864, the relation underwent a decisive change. Brahms, he says, showed much interest in Wagner's music while Wagner showed none in Brahms'. If Brahms had really been anxious for a reconciliation he could have seized the opportunity when he was asked to return the autograph of the Paris 'Tannhauser' scenes. He only returned it ten years later, 'unwillingly enough' admits Herr Geiringer.

The general criticism of Brahms' works which concludes the volume is sound if not particularly original in outlook.

The translation by H. B. Weiner and Bernard Miall is readable.

F. B.

*Arturo Codignola. Paganini Intimo.* Edito a cura del Municipio di Genova. (Price not given.)

Most men are apt to believe that advertising and glaring sensationalism are a phenomenon of our time. Signor Codignola's biography of Paganini which has just been published would seem to show that the early nineteenth century knew as much as we do on the subject. One object Signor Codignola has achieved is precisely to free the life story of Paganini from absurd legends; he presents us with a portrait of a gifted, fallible but human being, and refutes unsound evidence.

Paganini's earlier biographers were less scrupulous. It seems impossible for any sensible person to believe De Laphalègue's account of the contest between Paganini and the Veronese violinist Valdafrini, when Paganini is said to have used a cane instead of a bow. Yet that story has been accepted and repeated by more than one of his admirers. It was, no doubt, out of deference for the common idea that musical talent runs in families, that the same writer asserts that Paganini's father was an expert violinist. Signor Codignola attributes the error to the fact that a violinist did exist bearing the same name, who, however, was not related to Nicolo or to his father, Giovanni Antonio Paganini.

Much the same is true of the so-called Paganini secret which still engages the attention of unsound technicians. The valuable quotations from contemporary articles found in the volume give us all the evidence we need to conclude that the 'secret' was no secret at all but individual genius and a very unusual physical aptitude for the instrument. His playing certainly varied a great deal; sometimes he gave the impression of a charlatan exhibiting tricks of dexterity and sometimes the conviction of serious musicianship and consummate mastery.

Fétis began by accusing Paganini of indulging in *tours de force*, but ended with an acknowledgment frank and generous of his genius which included the employment of complex harmonies in improvised cadenzas.

Some 300 letters written by Paganini, mostly to his friend, L. G. Germi, add to the biographical interest, giving the musician's own version of events which sometimes were creditable and sometimes distinctly discreditable.

F. B.

*Ariberto Smareglia. Vita ed Arte di Antonio Smareglia.* Salvioni and Co. Bellinzona. 4 fr.

This is a second edition of the life of the composer, Smareglia, written by his son, Ariberto Smareglia. Some additions have been made refuting criticism and answering writers whose opinions tended to discredit the composer's private character. Such controversies can have, at best, only local importance and do not add to the interest of the volume.

F. B.

*Die Künstlerische Phantasia in der Formgebung der Dichtkunst Malerei und Musik.* Von Max Nussberger. F. Bruckmann, Munich. 12.50 marks.

Professor Nussberger's enquiry into the artist's fancy is concerned much more with painting and poetry than with music. Nevertheless what he has to tell us about musical forms is not only pertinent but also penetrating and no musician has described the importance and the fascination of a good canon better than the author of this solid and compendious volume.

In examining the principles which govern the development of form and 'order' in music, he passes in review the contributions of various masters and finds that their innovations correspond to a need of their time. Just as in regard to poetry, the symbolism of Dante which, impossible to-day, harmonised with his age so the Wagnerian system of leading themes, he finds, corresponded to the cultural spirit of the day—a principle passes but to make way for another. Discussion of modern methods, of Schönbergian theories is not attempted. We do not know whether Professor Nussberger is of opinion that these modern artists are outside the times or that the way of the artist is seen with difficulty by his contemporaries. There is also no word of Brahms who was surely of his time and as essential a factor in the development of music as Wagner.

F. B.

*Moussorgsky.* Par Vladimir Fedorov. Laurens: Paris. 10 fr.

This addition to the well-known series, 'Les Musiciens célèbres,' is the first book on Mussorgsky published in Western Europe since the appearance in 1932 of the complete Russian edition of Mussorgsky letters and documents. Within its limits, therefore, it is far more reliable and useful than the bigger German studies by von Rieseemann and von Wolfurt. Fedorov sketches the composer's life sympa-

thetically, softening—but not suppressing—the darker shades in his character, and then goes on to analyse the music, not exhaustively but concentrating on the most important and characteristic things.

The chief weakness in an admirable piece of work is the author's acceptance of all Mussorgsky's statements strictly at their face-value. The boastful autobiographical sketch written (probably for Hugo Riemann) in 1881 is a pitiable document; it is valuable, but as a piece of psychological evidence rather than for its accuracy in matters of fact. For instance, the statement about Father Krupsky's instruction (quoted by Fedorov on p.24) was denied by Krupsky himself. Fedorov also persists, in the absence of all evidence, in assuming that a first version of 'Night on the Bare Mountain' was written about 1860-62.

Particularly good is the author's painting of the general cultural background: the new, materialistic, anti-aesthetic Russia of the sixties, from which Mussorgsky took his colour. And he is one of the first to point out that Mussorgsky's drift to a more lyrical, less realistic style after 'Boris' was not purely individual but, like his earlier 'truth' and realism, part of a general, national movement. At the same time, he is careful to emphasise that 'in the tendencies common to his period, Mussorgsky was able to find his own personality, a rôle as reformer and precursor which he shared with none of his masters, comrades or contemporaries.'

GERALD ABRAHAM.

*As Time Went On. . .* By Ethel Smyth. Longmans. 15s. net.

Since Dame Ethel gave us 'Impressions That Remained' seventeen years ago, she has amused and stimulated us with sundry 'streaks of life,' 'female pipings' and 'burnings of boats.' Now at last comes the true sequel to her first book, though this second part of her autobiography takes us from 1891 only to 1894. (At this rate Dame Ethel's autobiography stands little chance of catching up to her life.)

Naturally to a certain extent we are given 'the mixture as before': racy, pungent writing, a number of sharply etched portraits which not even the brilliance of the central self-portrait can dim, wit, wisdom, eccentricity, unsurpassable candour and intellectual honesty—and not very much about music. (The author says frankly, 'Nothing would induce me to write a book aimed at the head of the musical reader . . . Mr. and Mrs. Everyman, with their families, are the public I really write for.') But let no one suppose that this is merely another three hundred pages of 'Ethelisms.' 'As Time Went On . . .' has left at least one reader of the earlier books with a much deeper respect for a remarkable character. Dame Ethel's previous books have frequently irritated him by their rather querulous reiteration of three *idées fixes*: the unmerited neglect of her music, the hostility of 'the Machine,' and masculine hostility to feminine effort in general. In this one there is very little peevishness, except in the last chapter—and even that contrives to remain generally good-humoured. On the other hand, the brief references to other troubles, the coming of deafness and the financial 'knock-out blow from the Argentine Republic,' command respect and sympathy by their restraint. The account of the relationship with Henry Brewster, which is the

chief subject of the book, can hardly fail to win the sympathy of any reasonably broad-minded reader.

As a whole, however, the book does suggest an additional reason for the author's failure to win the high place in the musical world she feels to be rightly hers. A Muse is a jealous mistress. Even a Beethoven with a passion for hunting, a passion for golf, a passion for female suffrage and a passion for passionate friendships would have been rather seriously handicapped as a mere composer of music. Wagner could dabble in politics and also stop composing for a year or two to write prose that was germane to his life-work, but he could hardly have thrown over music for two years to devote himself to the fight for socialism.

By this underlying sense of unmerited neglect, as well as by its candour and vividness, 'As Time Went On . . .' recalls two other fine artistic autobiographies, Berlioz's and Haydon's. Berlioz was at any rate great enough a composer (even his detractors must admit) to justify his complaints to later readers; Haydon was not great enough a painter. Dame Ethel feels that music which has won the admiration of Julius Röntgen, Hermann Levi and Thomas Beecham, among others, must be very good. But notwithstanding that Keats, Lamb, Wordsworth, Leigh Hunt and Mrs. Browning all thought highly of Haydon as a painter, posterity honours him only because he could write.

GERALD ABRAHAM.

*Neues Beethoven-Jahrbuch*, Vol. 6 (1935). Edited by Adolf Sandberger. Henry Litolf's Verlag (Brunswick): No price marked.

This valuable publication, now in its sixth year, is as full of meat as the proverbial egg. Eduard Panzerbieter writes on 'Beethoven in Regensburg, 1795,' Marianne von Czéke on 'Beethoven in Hungary,' Otto Deutsch on the poet C. L. Reissig, who provided the words of the 'Lied aus der Ferne' and other of Beethoven's songs, Georg Kinsky on 'The Sale of Beethoven's Musical Remains' (November 5th, 1827), Max Unger on the Beethoven manuscripts in the Library of the Paris Conservatoire, Erwin Kroll on 'Carl Maria von Weber and Beethoven' (a very useful piece of re-focussing, legend and hasty assumption having got their relations in rather distorted perspective), and Friedrich Munter on Beethoven's transcriptions of his own works, while the editor contributes an essay on the earlier criticisms and appreciations of Haydn's music in Germany, and reviews of books and music. In addition to these essays, three other contributions are worth special attention. Willy Hess devotes a study to Beethoven's Sonata for Flute and Piano, published by Zimmermann in 1906, showing in detail how widely the published edition by Ary van Leeuwen differs from the manuscript in the Royal Library at Berlin. This work was accepted by Thayer, though Riemann in his 1917 edition of Thayer doubted its authenticity; Hess considers its authenticity 'no more doubtful than, say, that of the Jena Symphony'—and we must leave it at that. Fritz von Reinöhl has unearthed three letters throwing a certain amount of fresh light on Beethoven's period of study with Haydn in 1793: letters from both composers to the Elector of Cologne and the Elector's thoroughly dissatisfied reply. Stephan Ley's 'Kleine Beethoveniana' consists of a number of interesting odds

and ends, e.g. a note on the Irish-Russian Count Browne (whom Beethoven styled 'premier Mécène de sa Muse'), numerous corrections of the accepted chronological order of Beethoven's letters and some amusingly contradictory evidence of Beethoven's knowledge (or ignorance) of Latin, French, Italian and English.

GERALD ABRAHAM.

*Wollen und Wirken.* By Guido Adler. Universal-Edition, Vienna. (No price marked.)

This is hardly an autobiography in the usual sense, but an objective, almost impersonal, record of a life's work. The great Austrian musicologist has naturally known almost every distinguished musician of his day from Wagner to Schönberg, but he gives us all too few personal reminiscences—only three or four human glimpses throughout the book; statistics take the place of anecdotes. That is absolutely characteristic of the man, of course, but one wishes he had written his autobiography in a rather more unbuttoned mood. After all, he has included four volumes of Lanner and the Strausses in his great chain of 'Denkmäler der Tonkunst' and he tells us that his essay on Johann Strauss was a labour of love. But, despite its objectivity, an unconscious self-portrait does emerge from the book, the portrait of a great yet simple character. It is equally typical of Adler that he spent a year on preliminary studies before venturing to review Ellis's 'On the History of Musical Pitch' and that he begins his autobiography with a statement of 'my religion.'

GERALD ABRAHAM.

*Masters of Russian Music.* By M. D. Calvocoressi and Gerald Abraham. Pp. 511. Duckworth. 18s.

This collection of biographies by the two best-informed writers in England on Russian music may be considered a companion volume to G. Abraham's 'Studies in Russian Music.' Again full use is made of documents recently published in Soviet Russia—documents which, in the authors' words, 'completely changed the state of our information.' Indeed the pictures presented are in many important respects quite unfamiliar.

They are very true to type these Russians—like a series of characters from Tehekov: Glinka the Don Juan and Dargomijsky the mystery man; Moussorgsky who was as undisciplined (and as great) a drunkard as Verlaine, and Liadov the bored dilettante; Serov who wore the same hat for twenty years, and Tchaikovsky a morbid, self-deceiving neurotic; Scriabin brought up by his worshipping aunt and grandmother, and Rimsky-Korsakov, sailor, academician and fantasist; and finally, of the important ones, Balakirev, the leader of the 'Kutehka,' who suddenly became so religious that he gave up wearing furs, meat and smoking, and ate fish only 'provided it had not been knocked on the head.' The one man who seems not to have been a bit *détraqué* was Borodin, and he was as well-known a chemist as a musician. There's a set of gratifying subjects for a biographer! And in most cases the best has been made of the vast material, rich in thumb-nail sketches, correspondence and vivid recollections. Occasionally, in the



chapters on Tchaikovsky and Scriabin, for instance, a string of dates or a too detailed account of a journey or a performance is inclined to obscure the character drawing, and here it might have been a good plan to sweep aside the anecdotal side and deal more fully with the curious psychological problems which caused them to write the music they did. But this is perhaps asking too much; for the book as it is gives an unusually large amount of information that is new and interesting.

E. LOCKSPEISER.

*Studies in Russian Music.* By Gerald Abraham. Pp. 355. Reeves. 10s.

It is only about now that an unbiased view of the Russian 'nationalist' composers has become possible. Their influence, it is true, has long been a thing of the past; but now that the most recent representatives have veered to Western ideals the Russian period may be said to have ended. Also, the old appraisal is altered by recent publications of certain valuable documents. The present collection of essays, which one would hope is a foretaste of a complete new history by Mr. Abraham, puts forward the theory that 'hardly any of the best Russian music is inspired by erotic emotion and less still by psychological self-analysis.' That may strike one as a rather strange theory, but it is on the whole well substantiated. It is said, for instance, of Tchaikovsky (who counts as a 'classical,' if not as a 'nationalist,' composer) that an element of ballet music is at the heart of all his work. Well, we are shown a connection between the pizzicato movement in the fourth symphony and Delibes' *Sylvia*; and it is certainly interesting to consider the andante melody of the first movement of the sixth, and the slow movement of the fifth as 'ballet music strained to an emotional expressiveness foreign to its nature.' More than half the book is devoted to Borodine and Rimsky-Korsakov, and of the latter we have for the first time in English the confessions to Yastrebtsev. In the chapter on Moussorgsky who is bracketed, perhaps not very wisely, with Tolstoy, there are notes from Stassov. Other new or little-known facts are revealed in the chapter on Balakirev, 'a flawed genius' compared to Liszt, and on Dargomijsky's *The Stone Guest*, of which we have heard so much that it is time we had a performance. A bibliography would have been welcome.

E. LOCKSPEISER.

*The Gregorian Chant Manual of The Catholic Music Hour.* By the Most Reverend Joseph Schrembs, D.D., Bishop of Cleveland: Sister Alice Marie, O.S.U., Diocesan Supervisor of Music, Cleveland, Ohio: Reverend Gregory Huegle, O.S.B., Musical Director, Conception Abbey, Conception, Missouri. Silver, Burdett & Co. New York. pp. 330.

The book is further described on the Title-page as 'A practical method of integrating the study of Gregorian Chant and modern music, the teaching procedure in accordance with approved educational thought.'

A determined effort is being made by the Roman Catholic authorities to teach Plainchant throughout the primary schools, as well as other

music. This manual is issued to forward the task, and very elaborately it sets out to do so. It is based on the methods of Solesmes and shares the good and bad points of that school. The book is over-elaborated and ponderous. But it is full of good material and sound advice, which in practice the teachers will be able to discriminate, and utilize discreetly and with reservations and much simplification. The book is in itself an attractive volume, very systematically arranged for six different grades of pupils, and their progress month by month. It is hoped that it may find many teachers, with the skill and perseverance which it needs, who will make good use of it for the admirable purpose which it has in view.

WALTER FRERE.

*Introduction à la Paléographie Musicale Gregorienne.* Par Dom Grégoire M. Suñol, O.S.B., Moine de Montserrat. Société S. Jean Evangeliste, Desclée et Cie. Paris, Tournai, Rome. 1935.

This is a large book concerned primarily with paleography, and devoted to that particular section of the subject which concerns the way of writing music from the IXth to the XVIth century. As a paleographical treatise should be, it is duly illuminated by many facsimiles: they amount to more than 150. The music itself of the Gregorian chant—its nature, theory, æsthetic,—or again its history, harmonization, &c.—these topics lie quite outside the limited scope of this volume, and must not be looked for here. But for anyone concerned with the history of the transmission of the chant in the past, or its practical execution in the present, there is an immense deal which is of great importance.

The transmission of the Roman chant, as it pursued its victorious career over the whole of Western Europe, is in itself a fascinating part of musical diffusion, and the author in his Seventh Chapter organises, as it were, a Cook's Tour through the whole area. He himself acts as conductor; and a folding map at the end of the volume provides the tourist with a clear view of his itinerary. One uniform chant is found to prevail throughout, with only local variations, as far as the original Gregorian *corpus* of music is concerned. This provided for all the services required at that era: and whatever additions have been made, or omissions either, in the course of the thirteen and a half centuries during which it has been in use, plainchant abides, adaptable, but unchanging, in its true artistic and devotional ideals. The history of those centuries has much to tell of decay in the recording and performing of the chant: the singers of the early days, being not as yet alive to the possibilities of harmony, devoted all their talent to the perfecting of their monody: and the level of artistic perception and performance to which they attained was evidently a very high one: in delicacy and subtlety it probably surpassed any standard of singing which can be had now, except from the few and rare great *coloratura* singers.

For two of the great steps forward in the development of music in the later middle ages had a deleterious effect upon the plainchant. First the rise and progress of harmony threw monody into the shade: and secondly that harmony itself demanded increasingly the giving of

time-value to the notes and the consequent 'measurement' of music. The freedom of the nightingale was reduced to the fixity of the cuckoo. Under stress of this twofold attack plainchant became disintegrated: it lost its freedom of rhythm; and the tradition of the phrasing and execution of the elaborate unisonal or solo-chants faded away. Probably also the growing use of musical instruments to accompany the chant had a further deleterious effect, when music that was meant to be sung with all the freedom of a violin was harnessed to a mediæval trombone, or double-bass, or 'tromba marina.'

Still, even to this day it is the organ that kills the singing of plainchant with its mechanical rigidity: indeed continuous organ-accompaniment is only defensible when it is practically inaudible.

What has all that, you may say, to do with paleography and MSS. ranging from the IXth century to the renaissance? The point is that we are here dealing with a renaissance—a recovery of the true Gregorian tradition—and that paleography has done the lion's share of the work in bringing it about. The leaders of this renaissance have been the monks of St. Benedict at Solesmes—Pothier, Mocquereau Gajard and their fellow workers: and here Dom Suñol gives an account of it. His book was originally published by him in Catalan at his Abbey of Montserrat in 1925. The volume now under review is a French translation of the original, enlarged considerably (from 410 to 660 pages) and enriched by a Preface from the skilled master-hand of Dom Mocquereau.

The main points of the renaissance may be summarised thus:—

1. The purest forms of the neum-notation have been recovered, compared and exhaustively studied till they have delivered up their secrets. The groupings, first forming neum by neum singly, and then the combination of the various neums in elaborate melismatic passages have been recovered. It is surprising to see revealed, first, how chaotic the service books had become, and still were, down to the time of Dom Pothier and the reform-movement of Solesmes. And equally surprising to see revealed by the accumulation of paleographical data, how all the degradations and vagaries of the decadent centuries carry back their pedigree to a single Roman tradition, and in all the main essentials, recover the true Gregorian music as it should be. It is like getting back past Boyce & Co. to our own Tudor music.

2. Not only then have the neums been recovered, but also with them the main phrasing of the chant has come back to light: the close paleographical study of the early MSS. has revealed the existence of a system of signs supplementary to the neums, devised to describe the greater subtleties and interpretation of the elaborate chant, the delicate points of its association with the verbal text; e.g., the modifications of which the singer must take account in wedding the melody to the words, or in adapting a familiar and recurring phrase to the different places in which it figures. It is as though somehow we had not only recovered the text of what the soloist played in the cadenza of a violin concerto, or the singer had sung in a very florid aria, but also recovered the composer's MS. directions to the artist as to pause, accent, breath, bowing and the like.

This is the work that has been accomplished for Plainchant: and

here Dom Suñol gives a clear, lucid, readable and documented account of the whole accomplishment, and of Solesmes in particular.

It could not be satisfactory that his account should only be accessible to those who could read the Catalan original. The present edition in French should secure a much wider public. And indeed it is not only a question of language. The solid 16 quarto volumes which Solesmes has published since 1889 show the trustworthiness and progress of the recovery: but they are formidable, and there is need for something less daunting for the enquirer. He may turn to the supplementary volumes or treatises on Dom Mocquereau and others in which the problems are elucidated: but again he may easily be overburdened by these; and, impatient at the truly Benedictine leisureliness with which the matter proceeds, and cry out 'Oh I prefer the Short Story to Sir Walter Scott.'

Dom Suñol too is a Benedictine and is in no hurry: but he has given us a readable volume which tells how the Benedictines made the renascence, and what the results of the renascence are. They have had their coadjutors and also their competitors. This book gives an account of some of the rival systems that have come up as a result of the renascence, and disappeared again—especially the conflict between the Mensuralists of various views and the advocates of that free oratorical rhythm to which the leaders of the Solesmes school pin their faith.

There is an elaborate Bibliography covering 60 pages, and the admirable Indexes take up another 40 pages.

All this bespeaks a certain finality about the volume as a book which will fill many needs and last long.

WALTER FRERE.

*Don Juan de Mañara.* Opera in Four Acts by Eugene Goossens.  
Libretto by Arnold Bennett. J. & W. Chester.

It is almost impossible adequately to judge an opera as a stage work from the printed page of a vocal score. One may gauge its musical value, its construction, its literary qualities, but one cannot do much more than guess its actual dramatic effect until it has come to life on the stage. There is no doubt however that Eugene Goossens's 'Don Juan de Mañara' is a valuable addition to the small but growing number of English Operas. The composer has been well served by the admirable text of Arnold Bennett, which presents vividly a series of dramatic episodes, reaching a fine climax in the last scene. In the early acts the movement may be somewhat impeded by Don Juan's tendency to expatiate on his ideals, but something of the kind is certainly demanded by the necessity of making clear psychologically the hero's character, and of thus arousing our sympathy with one whose behaviour can scarcely be expected to win our esteem. Otherwise the action is tense and there is no superfluous matter.

Goossens's general treatment is an admirably swift declamation (in fact sometimes, as in the case of the phantom of Don José in the last act, so swift as to be not quite comfortable). He never forgets that the pace of English is great, and that if it is to keep its character it cannot afford to be set to notes of any great length.

Should the orchestration prove to be sufficiently restrained to allow the words to be heard, the result should be completely natural and telling. It is possible that the tendency to leave longish gaps between phrases, especially in conversations, may at times awkwardly retard the action, but this can scarcely be verified until the work is seen on the stage. There is some use of motifs, often not more than short rhythmic phrases, but they are skilfully woven into the general texture, and are employed rather to emphasise the mood than to depict persons. An instance of the latter use is the halting furtive phrase which always denotes the presence of Hussein, Juan's servant. Effectively expressive as this is, it sometimes would appear to hold up the movement, as at his entry which interrupts the final climax of Act 1, and again at his conversation with Catalina at the door of Doña Inés' room in Act 2. The most lyrical moments are to be found in this latter act, notably the charming lesson with the fan given by Inés to her maid, Catalina, the Serenade of Juan, and the scene between him and Inés, which is notable for its emotional warmth and highly expressive vocal line. It is perhaps a pity that the final climax in this act should as in the first be a quick movement built upon a prolonged pedal, skilfully conceived though they both are. The third act is admirably done; there is no flagging in the drama of the scene in which Don Luis stakes all his worldly goods and finally his mistress Paquita, and loses them all to Don Juan, to the accompaniment of snatches of a distant drinking chorus, and the richly sensuous music of Paquita forms a fine contrast, and carries on the drama relentlessly, through the scene where she attempts to poison Juan, to her own death by the poisoned cup which she drains rather than yield to him. The final act, which should be very impressive from a stage point of view, brings the work to a striking climax with the appearance to Juan in the church of the Sacred Rosary of those for whose deaths he has been responsible. The act, apart from the lyrical scene in which Juan attempts to seduce the novice Marta, naturally depends for its effect upon its declamatory strength. Juan is saved by the intervention of Marta and with a friar's cloak on his shoulders he is led away as the curtain falls to the chanting of novices and the tolling of bells.

The only prelude of any considerable length is an intermezzo before the last act, which is built upon some of the material already used, with special emphasis on the music of Paquita.

The opera exemplifies the composer's grasp of the exigencies of the stage, and as his most important work represents his individual style in its ripest form. In a foreword to the excellently got-up vocal score he states the sources from which Arnold Bennett drew his material, pointing out that his profligate hero is a different personage from the Don Juan of Mozart's opera.

CLIVE CAREY.

*The Structure of Music: An Outline for Students.* By R. O. Morris. Oxford University Press. 4s. 6d.

Those who know Professor Morris's *Contrapuntal Technique of the Sixteenth Century* will not need to be told that his *Structure of Music* is a model of clarity both of expression and in its own structure. The

author has compressed, with charm, what has been delivered by others, sometimes formidably, in more than double the space. The matter falls into two natural halves—the discussion of harmonic forms and of contrapuntal forms; in the latter it is some measure of the change in public appreciation that a considerable section has had to be devoted to the Choral Prelude.

Professor Morris's introductory chapter on the Elementary Principles of Melodic Form is admirable. Had plainsong been a more generally familiar idiom, it might have been tempting for him to have pushed back, chronologically, some of his early examples well behind the folk-song period. It is seldom credited that the Gregorian antiphons and the office hymns frequently exhibit most interesting examples of balance of phrase, sequence, repetition, and generally organised structure.

Rightly the author insists that, 'by fair means or foul,' the student must become possessed of a small collection comprising the Bach suites and partitas, the 'Forty-Eight,' the pianoforte sonatas of Mozart and Beethoven, and the best-known classical concertos, if he is to follow the steps of the argument with benefit. 'This is no idle warning, for many students are strangely unalive to the absolute necessity of forming a small working library of their own. They do not seem to realise that such a nucleus forms an essential part of a musician's working capital, and that such works as those mentioned above must be included in its minimum requirements.'

Professor Morris and the Oxford Press have collaborated with extraordinary success in producing a text book from which the element of grimness is entirely absent.

J. H. ARNOLD.

*Predicaments, or Music and the Future.* By Cecil Gray. Oxford University Press. 7s. 6d.

This essay in constructive criticism is designed by the author 'to set forth and examine the situation in which music finds itself to-day; and to determine, so far as is possible, the course of development that the art is likely to follow in the immediate future.'

Mr. Gray's conclusions as to the future of music are largely founded upon successive periods of supremacy of the arts of architecture, sculpture, painting, literature and music, which he has traced through the centuries, beginning with the eleventh. Accepting his own dictum that music has lost its lead of the arts, and adopting the occurrence of the periods of supremacy of each art in the sequence already mentioned, and postulating their recurring rotation, Mr. Gray foresees that a period of architectural supremacy is hard upon us, during which 'the other arts will accept its values and aspire towards its condition.'

One is justified in expecting the critic to apply his critical faculty to his considered criticisms, and to support them with such proof as may be available. Of Mr. Gray's critical statements that are particularly open to discussion, I may choose one from his chapter, *Evolution and Devolution*.

*The music of Palestrina . . . is complex in comparison with the art of his successors, the Florentine experimenters, Peri and Caccini,*



*which was little more than a drastic simplification of existing resources, and less notable for what they created than for what they destroyed. . . . From every point of view the new departure represented a definite retrogression.*

This seems scarcely fair to the two composers, whose distinction lay in their having realised that the technique of composition had grown to an importance that strangled the poetic conception. The inspiration of their movement lay in the idea of conserving the poetic value of the words for which they wrote music; and their simplification applied to the technique, rather than aiming in any way at a retrogression, or an artificial primitivism.

No doubt this is a matter of opinion; and differ from him as one may, it would be ungracious not to recognise the fecundity of phrase with which Mr. Gray points his arguments. Let me choose a few of his obiter dicta: *Atonality is inverted academicism. Excellence is not relative, but absolute. In art nothing which is pure innovation has any enduring vitality. The highest achievements are those of artists who, while always remaining themselves, . . . have nevertheless succeeded in giving expression to ideas, conceptions, and sentiments which are common to all.*

Finally, one cannot but admire the author's ready facility for launching in the guise of a proved conclusion—well uttered, readable, and rash—a postulate that would need a good deal more proving than he gives it. Yet had he set himself to provide complete proofs for all his propositions, his book would have been three times its size; and it is so interesting that I wish it had been.

HERBERT BEDFORD.

*Der Chorstil Henry Purcell's.* By Fritz de Quervain. Paul Haupt. Fr. 3.80.

This is an enthusiastic account of Purcell's technique, in the anthems exclusively. A number of typical passages are taken and carefully analysed, and with an economy of words. Attention is drawn to the strettos (*Verdichtungen*), with the voices either singly or in groups (*Gruppierungen*), as a means of avoiding monotony; both are in Byrd (e.g., *Great Service*, 'and we are the people of His pasture'), but certainly Purcell makes more of a practice of it. Next, to the passages of block harmony—choral recitative, the style of Palestrina and of the Venetians (antiphonal), and the *Hallelujahs*. Then, to the theme-building, mostly syllabic (nothing like Handel's *melismata*), their typical curves, their word-painting; but behind all these the wonderful inventiveness which finds infallibly the musical phrase (like Mozart's) that exactly fits the sentiment. Lastly, the harmony: a good deal of the chords that seem to lie outside the key is due to the lingering feeling for the modes (the Dorian sharp sixth in the minor, the mixolydian flat seventh in the major, etc.); to this many of the 'false relations' (*Querstand*) can be traced.

Any whom this book sends back to Novello's edition (the only complete one at present) and to the voice parts—not the pianoforte *précis*, out of which all the pith has been lost—will be grateful.

A. H. F. S.

*Francis Planté.* Par Auguste Lenoir and Jean de Nahuque. Librairie D. Chabas, Hossegor. 15 frs.

The lives of musical performers, however famous, are apt to be dull reading for everyone except, perhaps, the subject of the biography. The objective chronicle of concerts and travel is often the mere husk of a life that seemed rich and crowded to its possessor. The authors of this volume, however, have been exceptionally fortunate in their subject. The very length of Francis Planté's life gives it a certain distinction. When he studied music as a child in Paris at least one sedan chair was still in use; during the great war he emerged from his well-earned rest to give concerts in aid of war victims.

A rare wealth of anecdotes adds to the interest of the biography. There are stories of meetings with Rossini, who had a paternal affection for the French pianist, of adventures in Italy and in pre-war Russia, of visits to London, where Planté was entertained by the 'high-class Britanque.' A very readable volume.

M. R. B.

*Proceedings of the Musical Association, 1934-5.* £1 1s.

For the reader whose tastes are not specialised, perhaps the outstanding paper is that by Professor Dent on 'The Translation of Opera'—describing an activity which calls not merely for good musicianship and good scholarship, but also for a sense of humour, a willingness to compromise, and a real sense of literary style. It is well known that Professor Dent's possession of these varied qualities and abilities have been responsible for his successes in this field. That the reward of such labour is scanty may be guessed from his concluding paragraph. 'I hope this paper will not encourage any member of the Musical Association to take up translation in his spare time. I must warn you that singers do not like new translations, and I believe that many people in audiences prefer old ones. No English opera company is willing to pay a fee for the use of a translation, and no publisher is willing to print one. The only reason why I go on translating operas is because I find it an amusing occupation on a holiday.'

Other papers which represent the fruit of serious scholarship are 'Haydn's Opus Two and Opus Three,' by Miss Marion M. Scott, an analysis of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck by Mr. Herbert Antcliffe, a study of 'The Development of Folk-Song in Portugal and the Basque Country,' by Mr. Rodney Gallop, and a paper on 'The Vocal Accompaniment of Plainsong,' by Mr. S. Royle Shore. A paper of a somewhat novel type for the Association was contributed by Miss Katharine Eggar, on 'The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford as Musician, Poet and Controller of the Queen's Revels,' which provoked a very interesting discussion.

Blom, Eric: *Mozart* ('The Master Musicians'). Pp. xl. 387. Dent. 1935. 4s. 6d.

Boschot, Adolphe: *Mozart.* ('Les Maîtres de l'histoire.') Pp. 255. Librairie Plon. 1935. 25 fr.

The old volume on Mozart in the 'Master Musicians' series, for all its imperfections, did good service in its day, and one reader at least

is a little sorry to think that it is now doomed to disappear from all but the most hospitable shelves. But it must be admitted that no amount of tinkering could ever have turned it into a good book, and Mr. Blom had obviously no option but to scrap it and write an entirely new work in its stead. It may be said at once that he has made an excellent job of it. He has made full use of the biographical and critical material that has accumulated in the interim, and has even had the good fortune to be granted access to Dr. Einstein's still unpublished revision of Köchel. The result is a comprehensive survey which can be unhesitatingly recommended both to the student and to the general reader as the best thing of its kind in English. Of his two main sections, devoted respectively to 'life' and 'works,' the second is by far the better. His biographical pages suffer a little from the extreme compression inevitable in any brief summary of a life so fully documented as Mozart's, and even more from a certain jauntiness in the writing, which, though evidence no doubt of a praiseworthy detachment, is apt to become irritating after a time. It is only fair to add, however, that this is only noticeable in the first few chapters of the book, and that Mr. Blom's later pages fully atone for this temporary lapse of judgment. What he has to say of the music is, on the other hand, nearly all first-rate. He is, of course, unable to deal with more than a small percentage of Mozart's enormous output, but he has ranged far wider afield than most of his predecessors, and has made many happy discoveries. The musical quotations with which he has scattered his pages are the best tribute to the thoroughness with which he has worked and to the independence of his judgment. They are refreshingly unhackneyed and nearly all illustrate the essential rather than the accidental characteristics of Mozart's style. They form indeed a miniature Mozart anthology, and anyone who is tempted to sum up Mozart's achievement in an easy phrase would be well advised to study them carefully before committing himself. On one point some lovers of Mozart may be inclined to quarrel with Mr. Blom. 'It is the simple truth,' he says, 'that [Mozart] was not one of the great melodic originators, much less so than many a smaller composer. His melody appeals, but does not smite or exact attention forcibly. It is not what he says that makes him the incomparable artist he is but the incredibly finished, apt and well-ordered way in which he states, strings together and expands his ideas.' This passage seems to imply a very arbitrary definition of the word 'melody,' and it is perhaps significant that on the very next page Mr. Blom speaks of Gounod, Tchaikovsky, Bizet and Puccini as 'more strikingly individual melodists than Mozart.' But why should a melody which smites or excites attention be greater than one which merely appeals? It is true that Mozart wrote few tunes that can be whistled in the street or strummed upon the barrel-organ, but if such passages as the slow movement (or even the opening movement) of the Clarinet Quintet, the opening movement of the Piano Concerto in A (K. 488) and many of those cited by Mr. Blom himself do not display the highest powers of melodic invention, the phrase is as good as meaningless.

M. Boschot's book, which is also intended primarily as a manual for the general reader but will be found equally stimulating by the more advanced student, serves as a valuable supplement to Mr. Blom's, if only because it brings to the fore a theme which he scarcely so

much as mentions, though it is obviously of the greatest interest. It is that of the curious discrepancy between Mozart's reputation and his popularity. For there can be no doubt that among the few composers generally admitted to be of the first rank Mozart occupies an enviable but somewhat ambiguous position. Except perhaps during his lifetime his greatness has never been seriously questioned, and his reputation, once established, has remained at a consistent level, scarcely affected by periodic changes of taste. And yet, somehow, he has never quite succeeded in imposing himself upon the general public. M. Boschot appears to think that this comparative indifference is merely the result of ignorance or misunderstanding, and it is the object of his book to remove these hindrances to a proper appreciation of the master. He writes well, even brilliantly at times, and has the great gift of infecting the reader with his own enthusiasm, but all the same it may be doubted whether he ever really comes to grips with this particular question. At times, indeed, he seems to imply that Wagner is the real villain of the piece. But if it is the lusciousness of Wagner's orchestra that has drowned the still, small voice of Mozart, how is one to account for the popularity of Bach? Perhaps after all Mr. Blom came nearer to the truth. The plain man wants either a tune or something with a good rhythmic kick in it and, rightly or wrongly, finds neither in Mozart. It is very doubtful whether even Mr. Boschot's eloquence will make him change his mind.

C. B. O.

## REVIEWS OF MUSIC

The following abbreviations are used: [Ch] Chester, [O] Oxford University Press, [Cr] Cramer.  
*Solo pianoforte*

Aulay, Ion: *Sonata in E minor. Five Lyric Pieces*. An abundant succession of decorative effects, using the whole range of the instrument at will and a large and interesting array of pianistic devices, alternating with a deliberately simple folk-song manner, form the more noticeable ingredients of the sonata. It is a work spread over a large canvas. That term, taken as it is from the terminology of graphic art, serves well as a description of music which is pictorial and indeed picturesque in mood. It is well worth playing and hearing, each activity once. It shows inventive ability and rather less imagination. It needs (or rather its successor should have) more attention paid to construction which in this sonata carries less weight than a work of its size and shape demands. The Lyric Pieces are slighter and therefore more shapely. Again the writing shows interest in pianistic decoration. Sometimes too much reliance is placed on patterns and an easy way out seems to have been taken, for instance in the lengthy succession of 6/4s in the 'Quasi Valse' where the device soon becomes tiresome for the very reason that it has no constructive thought behind it. There is also a tendency to turn on some broad, folk-song-like tune the material of which lacks distinction when analysed. All in all these works leave one interested in the composer, glad to have met the music and willing to await more. [Ch]

Bloch, Ernest: *Sonata*. The impassioned opening bars set the tone of the work which even in the Pastorale (second movement) has much the same energy and richness. It is the storm of life that the composer, here as elsewhere, seems to be viewing and reporting on. The writing is exuberant, highly decorated and outspoken. Restraint, when allowed, is that of a man taking a hurried breath before the next attack. [Carisch. Milan]

Milford, Robin: *Prelude, Air and Finale on a well-known mordent*. The best is saved for the last when, surprisingly enough, the Finale says more that is to the point than did the rest of the work. The mordent, any mordent, offers precious little on which to build a movement. It is when the composer gets off the track that he provides something worth attention. [O]

### *New editions*

Handel: *Sonate für Querflöte und Generalbass. Sonate für Oboe, Geige und Generalbass*. Apart from musical value, which is considerable, the interest of these two issues resides in the fact that the

sonatas have long lain hidden in the Archeipiscopal Library at Paderborn, having originally formed part of the Fürstenberg-Herdringen collection. It appears from the preface to each work that the sonatas have been accepted by the authorities as true Handel. The edition is a model of clarity. [Bärenreiterverlag. Kassel]

Telemann, G. F.: *Drei Dutzend Klavier Fantasiën*. The title is strange and unfortunate, making it difficult for the hearer to combat the inevitable dryness of much clavier music of this period when such music is served up by the dozen. 'A proper composer should be able to set a placard to music' is a remark attributed to Telemann. Too many of these little pieces are the result of an unrestrained fertility. [As above]

#### *Concerted Chamber Music*

Landré, Guillaume: *Trio for piano, violin and 'cello*. A work in three movements, the form cyclic, the manner slightly French (though the composer is suspected of belonging to another nation which writes the christian name in another fashion). There is good, honest workmanship here and a pretty inventiveness as well as a light touch which shows itself in the restraint with which each instrument is treated. It is transparent writing and should sound admirable from that point of view. Individuality? er—yes, but the chief recommendation for the work is its stylishness. It is consistently on one very fair level of excellence both of thought and workmanship throughout. At the end one feels that one has heard a definite, considered statement. [Paris: Lyrebird Press]

Sutherland, M.: *Sonata for violin and piano*. Was there any inner necessity that caused these three movements to be made? Before it was begun had the composer a clear idea of what she wanted to say? When it was ended did she know what she had been talking about? The discussion has too many loose ends; there is nothing conclusive about it. The music is given some pleasant decorations but they make the mixture of styles no less disconcerting. [Lyrebird Press. Both of these works are produced in a way that makes the mouth water.]

#### *Collections*

*Songs of the North*. The Fiftieth Anniversary volume of this well-known collection makes its appearance in a handsome, clearly printed edition. The arrangements are for the most part simple and just. The original compositions are suitable to the general style of the music in the rest of the volume. [Cr]

#### *Opera*

Vaughan Williams, R.: *The Poisoned Kiss or the Empress and the Necromancer*. A Romantic Extravaganza written by Evelyn Sharp. Music as above. It is becoming increasingly evident that modern opera, at the mercy though it still is of the meanest musical intelli-



gence that has money, is to stand or fall by its libretti. People to-day are less and less inclined to accept nonsense as a background to good music. If that stuff continues to be turned out, concert halls and wireless will gobble up 'excerpts' and the opera house will empty itself. The sooner composers realise that their responsibilities reach beyond the music the better for opera. Not that this libretto by Evelyn Sharp is nonsense: far from it. Much of it is delightful, much amusing, much witty. But in general there is an amiable and naive reliance on obvious rhyming devices as well as a jejune type of humorous writing that destroy the music by pert incursions into the domain of its own purely musical beauty. Or are we putting the cart before the horse, accusing the libretto which came first of spoiling the music which came second? Certainly the music, or rather the musician, has always as much to answer for as the librettist. He can always have tale and lines cast to his liking before putting pen to paper. In this Extravaganza the humour is ineffective because it belongs to an age not our own yet close enough to ours for us to be a little awkward in the presence of its Edwardian archness. So much it seems, at least to a reader on the threshold of his forties. By an effort of will and imagination one can also look at the thing through two other pairs of eyes. The elderly, brought up perhaps on Andrew Lang's fairy books, would ask nothing better than that so simple a tale should be told with a corresponding simplicity that would leave undisturbed the half-human, half-fairy atmosphere. The music would come in there as a tactful Sullivanesque medium in which the tale would remain suspended as the calves-foot in the jelly. As for the other class of audience, the young people of to-day, they might possibly accept a completely modernistic treatment of the tale with words for the foxtrots and tangoes as 'hot' and as sentimental-sloppy as these things are in the theatres and music halls of the day. That would mean music like 'Jonny spielt auf' though it could still be subtle. In both cases the present libretto falls short and the opera of necessity with it. Taken piece by piece the music is alternately lovely, moving, intriguing, diverting. Many of the pieces will make their way, it is devoutly to be hoped, item by item into the programmes of orchestral concerts and recitals. Of the fate of the work as an opera we are less sanguine. [O]

SCOTT GODDARD.

## REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

*Sovetskaya Muzyka*. Moscow. January, 1936.

G. Khubov: *Myaskovsky and his 15th Symphony*. A. Alschwang: *Philosophical Themes in Scriabin's Work*. M. Altmann: *Music Judged by a Moralist (Leo Tolstoy)*. *Franz Liszt's Letters* (serial publication of a Russian translation, in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of Liszt's death). Ninon Vallin: *On Claude Debussy*. A. Rimsky-Korsakov: *In Memory of V. V. Yastrebtsev*.

Khubov prefaces his discussion of Myaskovsky's new symphony (finished in 1934) with a critical survey of the composer's work in general. Myaskovsky seems to have steered a retrograde course. His first three symphonies, which appeared before the Revolution, showed the influence of Scriabin; but the fourth, written in 1917, deals with the theme 'of struggle and active yea-saying to life.' It was quickly followed by the 'Pastoral' (No. 6), in which 'for the first time he turned to folk-song and folk-dance material.' This work, 'written with the heart's blood' and 'one of Myaskovsky's strongest and most impressive works,' Khubov considers to be 'the finale of Russian pre-revolutionary symphonism.' 'The further evolution of Myaskovsky's work, from the 6th—through the 8th and 9th—to the 12th ('Collective Farm') and finally to the 14th and 15th symphonies shows the composer definitely embarking on a new course, a course of inner, organic consciousness of the new problems that confront him as a Soviet artist.' Which, being interpreted, means that he has turned from Scriabinesque complication to a simple diatonic lyricism to be understood of the masses.

February.

*Nonsense Instead of Music (On the opera 'The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk' and the Ballet 'Deceit')* (articles reprinted from 'Pravda,' January 28 and February 6). N. Chemberdzhin: *Soviet Composers of the Red Army*. A. Novikov: *Campaign for the Songs of the Civil War*. I. Neumark: *On the Songs of the Civil War*. K. Sezhensky: *On the Compositions of T. Khrennikov*. V. Delson and A. Mashistov: *Grigory Kohan*. S. Kleshchov: *Two Ways of Developing Pianistic Technique*. A. Levitin: *Three Excerpts from the Novel, 'In the College of Music.'*

Of special interest in this number is the reprint of the now famous 'Pravda' article excommunicating 'The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk': 'From the first minute listeners are stupefied by an utterly discordant, nonsensical stream of sounds. Broken fragments of melody, little embryos of musical phrases pop out, only to disappear again in the uproar, the scraping and the squeaking. To follow the "music" is difficult, to remember it impossible. Almost the whole of the opera

is like this. Singing is replaced by shrieks and cries. If the composer happens to lapse into a bit of simple, understandable melody, he is literally frightened at this misfortune and quickly takes cover in a thicket of musical nonsense by turning these passages into sheer cacophony.' And so on. It is pleasant to see one of the oldest traditions of musical criticism flourishing so healthily in the brave, new Soviet world.

GERALD ABRAHAM.

*La Rassegna Musicale.* Turin. February, 1936.

S. A. Luciani: *La musica opera di magia.* F. Fano: *In memoria di Gaetano Cesari.* K. Jeppesen: *Del contrappunto.*

Jeppesen's article, the preface to a forthcoming book on counterpoint, is a lucid survey of the two main streams of contrapuntal teaching: the Fux-Cherubini-Albrechtsberger-Prout-Kitson-Morris line deriving from Palestrina, and the Kirnberger-Jadassohn-Riemann line originating in Bach. He points out that the former, though the sounder tradition, has always suffered from Fux's defective knowledge of Palestrina's style and concludes that the time has come for a new work based on a more intimate comprehension of sixteenth century counterpoint.

March.

A. Einstein: *Un sonetto del Petrarca nella musica Cinquecento.* G. Gavazzeni: *Dell'immagine letteraria nella musica.*

The Petrarch sonnet of Einstein's essay is LXXXV (*I' vo' piangendo i miei passati tempi*), which he takes as particularly characteristic of the *Stimmung* of the period. He then studies comparatively the various musical settings of the sonnet by Arcadelt, Giovanni Domenico da Nola, Baldassare Donato, Vincenzo Ruffo, the Fleming Giaches de Wert, Andrea Gabrieli (whose setting is truly revolutionary), Marco da Gagliano, and other composers.

April.

A. Mantelli: *Note su Alban Berg.* R. Mariani: *L'ultimo Puccini.*

Mantelli's Berg article is a useful survey of the whole of the composer's work from the Op. 2 songs to *Lulu*. The writer has nothing particularly new to say, but he has got Berg very clearly focussed.

GERALD ABRAHAM.

*Musica d'oggi.* Milan. February, 1936.

F. Mazzi: *L'evoluzione della musica in Europa.* O. Svampa: *Gridi e canti popolari maceratesi.*

Svampa's little study of popular cries and songs of the Piceno consists mainly of specimens in music-type of songs and short scraps of melody collected by himself, including some particularly curious fishmongers' cries with unusual intervals.

## April.

F. Pastura: *Un'arietta inedita di Vincenzo Bellini*. C. Polacco: *Il canto nella lirica moderna*.

The unpublished arietta by Bellini, 'Era felice un di,' given as a musical supplement to this number, was recently found in the Central National Library at Florence. Pastura dates it 1890. It is pleasant and characteristic but not very important.

GERALD ABRAHAM.

*La Revue Musicale*. Paris. February.

Henry Prunières: *Les tendances actuelles de la musique*. Y. Lacroix-Navarro: *De Schumann à Brahms*. Julien Tiersot: *Une lettre de Wagner à Schumann*. A. Drougard: *Villiers de L'Isle-Adam et Rd. Wagner*. Henri Allorge: *La maison de Wagner à Bellevue*. Robert Pitrou: *Comment naît le musique en Mozart*. André Suarès: *La mer*, par Claude Achille.

The interest and value of the first article centre in the description and discussion of French composers and music. This useful document is part of a contribution to the new volume of the *Encyclopédie Française*. The second article takes Brahms's *Variationen über ein Thema von Robert Schumann*, op. 9, attempts an impartial judgment not of the music but, strangely enough, of the two composers, and ends by having less to say for the character of Brahms than for that of Schumann. In 1868 and again in 1870 Villiers de L'Isle-Adam is said to have visited Triebtschen. Unluckily he got the dates muddled. Did he get the facts wrong, too? He was there in 1869, for his fellow-travellers Judith Gautier and Catulle Mendès, vouch for it. And now the Journal of Cosima has been ransacked and the truth is there for all who wish to avail themselves of it. The article on Mozart is much less off the point than at first might have been suspected.

## April.

Emile Haraszti: *Liszt à Paris*. Alfred Colling: *Schumann et le 'Faust' de Goethe*. Jacques Maritain: *Sur la musique d'Arthur Lourié*. Igor Markévitch: *Introduction au 'Paradis perdu'*. André Suarès: *Sur la musique*.

'C'est Paris qui a formé Liszt et pourtant la musicologie française pendant longtemps l'a bien oublié.' So far M. Haraszti, his article describes the young Liszt and his father during the early period in Paris from 1823 onwards. The article on Schumann and Goethe tells of a choral work which is said to be little known in France, and is hardly more so here, for that matter. The well written article on Lourié makes an effective plea for a hearing of his music. Markévitch tells the reader what he was out to express in his 'Paradis perdu.'

*Revue de Musicologie*. Paris. February.

A. Machabey: *Etudes de musicologie pré-médiévale*. Curt Sachs: *Prolégomènes à une préhistoire musicale de l'Europe*.

The study of the music of the Latin society of the first century A.D. is continued in this issue with further notes on Quintillian and addi-

tional matter dealing with Tacitus and other contemporary historians. The other article deals with a still earlier state of music and adumbrates a possible method for the study of prehistoric sources by the aid of our present technique of archeology, ethnology and folk-lore. The article is a thorough piece of work and worth serious consideration.

*Revue du chant grégorien.* Grenoble. March.

D. R. Molitor: *Pie X.* D. O. d'Angers: *Sur le rythme.* D. L. David: *La belle part des fidèles dans la prière chantée.* Testis: *Un 'mystère' de Noël au village.*

The note on rhythm deals with certain technical problems of chanting and offers suggestions as to their solution. It puts one side of what is evidently a far-reaching controversy. The third article has to do with the congregational observance not only of the vocal but the ceremonial aspect of the office.

May.

D. Lucien David: *L'expressivité des strophiques.* Pierre Damas: *Erasmus et le chant grégorien.* D. R. Molitor: *Pie X.* D. L. David: *La 'Mora vocis' de Guy d'Arezzo.* P. C. d'Angers: *A propos de la psalmodie récitée.* D. L. David: *La belle part des fidèles.* . . .

The article on Erasmus is of wider appeal than most in this specialist's periodical, and though it deals with a relatively small matter in the humanist's life (the discussion on quantity contained in the *De recta latini*) it makes the subject interesting even to a lay reader. As much is done in the Guido d'Arezzo article, where a return is made to a more purely musical subject, the precise meaning of a phrase in the *Micrologus*.

*Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft.* Leipzig. December, 1935.

F. Blume: *Das Werk des Michael Praetorius (II.).* H. J. Zingel: *Zur Geschichte des Harfenkonzerts.* R. Bernhardt: *Van Swieten und seine Judas Maccabäus-Bearbeitung.* B. Szabolcsi: *Ein Skizzenblatt Beethovens aus den Jahren 1796/7.*

The most considerable contribution to a number unusually full of good things is the article on Praetorius, which continues the study commenced in a former issue and passes under review the latest critical material available. A comprehensive and detailed discussion of the history of the Harp Concerto makes a useful document. The term is used in its widest sense to include all concerted works with harp, for instance Ravel's 'Introduction et Allegro' and Debussy's 'Danses sacrées et profanes.' A catalogue of such works is given. A footnote (of sizeable proportions) to Handel research is to be found in the article on van Swieten's additions and alterations to the score of 'Judas Maccabeus.' The leaf from Beethoven's sketchbook has

to do with the C major Pianoforte Concerto, the Wind Octet (op. 103) and some untraceable material.

*Deutsche Musikkultur.* Kassel. April.

Von Staa: *Geleitwort*. Raabe: *Geleitwort*. Engel: *Unsere Aufgaben*. Bessler: *Das Erbe deutscher Musik*. Stein: *Musikkultur und Musikerziehung*. Müller-Blattau: *Matthäuspasion and Gelegenheitsratorium*. Blume: *Heinrich Schütz*. Schünemann: *Ein neues Bildnis von H. Schütz*.

This is the first number of what appears to be an official organ. It opens with two official messages, the one from the Chef des Amtes für Volksbildung im Reichs- und Preussischen Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, the other from the Präsident der Reichsmusikkammer. The article on 'Aufgaben' is an illuminating commentary on the present state of music in the Third Reich. Music itself is dealt with in the well written articles on Bach, Handel and Schütz.

*Anbruch.* Vienna. March.

Robert Henried: *Unbekannte Aufzeichnungen über Johannes Brahms*. Paul Stefan: *Eine Oesterreichische Monographienreihe*. Ludwig Schemann: *Hans von Bülow und Wagner*.

This small but lively periodical generally has something of interest to offer. The present number provides some valuable notes on Brahms based on the personal experience of Richard Heuberger. An excerpt from a new book on von Bülow is taken from the chapter dealing with his relations with Wagner.

*Caecilia en De Musiek.* Amsterdam. May.

Eduard Reeser: *Mahler. 'Wie ein schwerer Kondukt.'*

It is twenty-five years since Mahler died, and Holland still remains true. These two articles are short and to the point. The second deals with a puzzling direction in the score of the ninth symphony.

SCOTT GODDARD.



## GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

### *Harpsichord*

H.M.V. Handel: *Suites* (Wanda Landowska). This limited edition of six records comprises the suites in F major, E major and G minor from the First Book and those in G major and D minor from the Second. The playing of the quicker movements has a delightful crispness and is carried out with a strong, authoritative hold on the music. In the slower movements the tendency to allow the left hand to anticipate the right becomes in time an annoyance. It is probably in order to obtain an effect of spaciousness and grandeur that this method is employed. But experience shows that it is unnecessary and that the same effect can be had without breaking the chord. Nevertheless the performance in general is really admirable. Mme. Landowska would have put us still further in debt had she divulged the source of the score she has used. It certainly could not have been that of the German Handel Society, from which her rendering differs textually. Yet presumably Chrysander's sources were those mentioned by him in the introduction to his volume. Handel himself speaks of 'surreptitious and incorrect copies' abounding, and it may be that one such has been used here. The player shows a nice sense of style in her translation into sound of the printed ornaments. The album is prefaced by an introduction and notes by J. A. Westrup which are excellently helpful and informative.

### *Orchestral*

COLUMBIA. Beethoven: *The Seventh Symphony* (the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Weingartner). How refreshing it is to have one's Beethoven displayed in performance naturally and with a dignified humility of approach, this record unmistakably shows. Taken to pieces there is practically nothing to be said about it. Everything is in place (that, of course, is worth mentioning, for it can no longer be taken for granted nowadays) and nothing is stressed for any but the music's sake. One knows by the end that the orchestral playing has been good and hardly realises the presence of a conductor. All that is retained is the music. What more is wanted? This is the best record of this symphony that has come our way.

Haydn: *Concerto for 'cello and orchestra* (Emanuel Feuermann, a symphony orchestra conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent). Here, too, is good performance which gives the music a chance. The solo part is played with perfect ease and grace and the accompaniment murmurs in the background, always with vitality and precision, and when it has to come forward it says its say effectively.

Wagner: *Eine Faust Overture* (the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham). This is the kind of record that

has an all-round satisfactoriness to suit most tastes. The music itself gets a very fair deal and in the actual playing there is plenty of that heady brilliance, with sudden spurts of energy for energy's sake, which is *de rigueur* with some listeners. The recording is of the best quality.

H.M.V. Dvorak: *Fifth Symphony* (the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski). The efficiency of this performance is inescapable, though fortunately that is not the whole tale, for the playing apart from that is full of colour and the music is treated with a decent respect, as far as we have been able to check it. It makes a brilliant record.

Dvorak: *Slavonic Dances* (the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under Václav Talich). Besides the charm of the music (was there ever a prettier thing than the third dance?), the exact grace of the playing, with a lilt of the right weight and of a perfectly controlled liberty, gives these records a place to themselves and a high one. Even by those to whom Dvorak's music has so far not appealed, this record of the third dance might be tried.

Elgar: *The Enigma Variations* (the B.C.C. Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult). To get to know this work no better use could be made of the gramophone than through this record, for it gives the music clearly to the ear and the understanding, has much excellent orchestral playing and is altogether sane and well-disposed. The *tempi* are properly judged and evenly held. The beginning of the initial statement of the theme seems indecisive. Otherwise there is nothing exceptionable.

Wagner: *Selection from 'Die Walküre.'* Such a selection as this, well chosen, sung and played with the utmost skill by tried artists, should be welcomed by those who crowd to our two annual 'Ring' performances. Here is a chance to get the music into the bones, and since the words are a little clearer than they are in the opera house something of the poem may be grasped as well, which is indeed a boon.

Wagner: *Overture to 'Die Meistersinger'* (the L.P.O. conducted by Georges Szell). That which differentiates one good recording of such a work as this from another must always be a matter merely of minute variations of speed and dynamics. But among many good pieces of playing there are sure to be some that have the added excellence of sound interpretation, some that lack it. This one has it, and as a result it deserves the notice of the discriminating.

### **Solo Performances**

H.M.V. Bach: *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue* (Wanda Landowska). Harpsichord solo work of great distinction and dignity both in playing and in interpretation. The pianoforte could never produce this clarity of line.

COLUMBIA. Liszt: *Mazeppa* (Egon Petri). Fine piano playing and also Liszt playing of a peculiarly authoritative character. Petri's

technique makes light of it all. This should give the Liszt enthusiast everything his heart can desire.

H.M.V. Wagner: *Isoldes Liebestod* (Kirsten Flagstad). They say she looks and moves in this scene with as much assurance and grace as there is in her singing.

Wagner: *Brunnhildes Battle-cry* (Flagstad). And there were those who said that the singer never could exist who would make this sound a musical noise. Strauss: *Allerseelen* (the reverse side). How liable one is to forget that however many entrancing qualities of voice there may be that one has heard there will always be some new singer to astonish with some fresh combination of mind and muscle. Flagstad sings this hackneyed song as though she were discovering it as she went.

### Chamber Music

COLUMBIA. Bach: *Die Kunst der Fuge* (the Roth String Quartet). Here are riches for whoever feels inclined that way. With the O.U.P. full score and Sir Donald Tovey's treatise (also Oxford) to reinforce the introduction and notes he has contributed to this album there is nothing more to do than to settle down to hours, days, weeks, years of enjoyment, analysing at one's ease a work which never stays our question in the concert hall. The playing is all that could be wished. Tone, intonation and rhythm are in perfect trim. The manner of playing is solid without being heavy, strong without insistence, and the phrasing is supple. The thing will not have a wide appeal, but it is one of the best albums that has been issued since the idea was begun.

SCOTT GODDARD.

# OXFORD MUSIC

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